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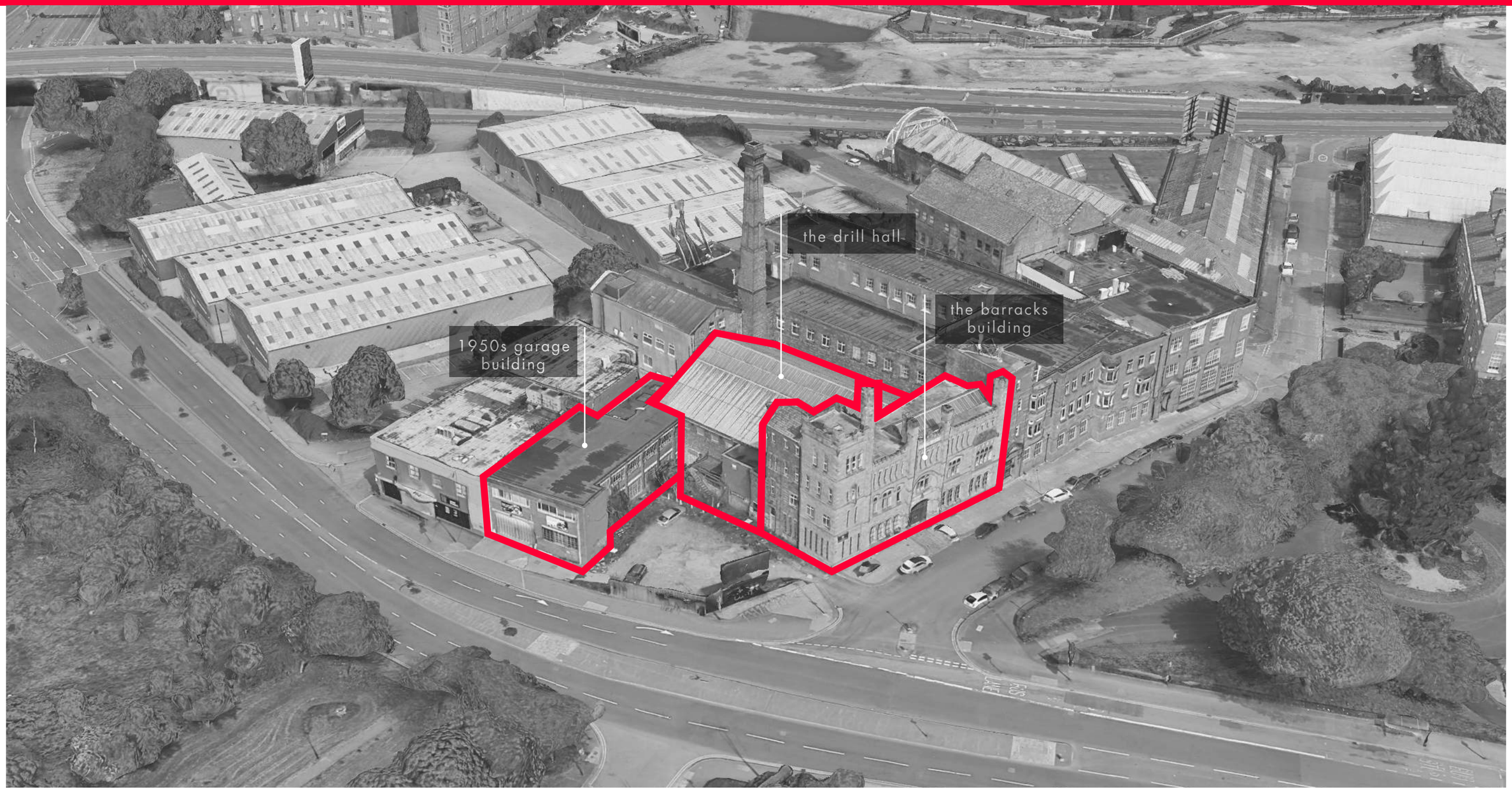
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01 introduction



01.01 executive summary

This Design + Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of Fabric Church in support of Planning and Listed Building applications for works to Ardwick Barracks.

The Ardwick Barracks site comprises the main barracks building fronting on to Ardwick Green, the drill hall immediately behind and a 1950s garage/workshop building orientated perpendicular to the drill hall. The bulidings were listed at Grade II in 1974 - all buildings and extensions on the site form part of this listing.

The existing surface car park that occupies the corner between the garage building and the drill hall is not within the church's ownership and does not form part of this application, albeit the ownership title affords rights of access across part of the car park site.

Part of the buildings (predominantly the garage building) is currently in use by Fabric Church for worship, outreach and community activities. However, the majority of the buildings are currently unoccupied and have been unused since the army vacated the property in 2018.

Fabric Church purchased the building in 2022 and submitted a planning applictaion for change of use to "... a place of worship with associated community facilities ..." in March 2023 (application reference 136050/FO/2023). Permission, subject to conditions, was granted in September 2023.

The building was in a poor condition when the church took possesion of the site and it became evident that some strip out and alterations had been carried out by the previous owners, apparently without the necessary listed building consents.

Following the completion of some light-touch and reversable fit out works to make a limited number of rooms habitable, the church's attention turned to stabilising the condition of the buildings and making them watertight to halt any further deterioration to the existing fabric; whilst simultaneously formulating a holistic long term plan for the site to ensure that any phased works didn't inhibit future development.

With this in mind, the current design team was appointed and instructed to progress a planning and listed building application for some early 'enabling' works, including the replacement of the leaking drill hall roof and roof lights and the barracks building roof light. This application was submitted in December 2024 and approved, with conditions, in March 2025. The team is working towards a start on site for these works in summer 2025 to make the building weathertight as soon as possible and prevent any lasting damage to the fabric of the buildings.

Meanwhile, the design team has been progressing more extensive plans for the conservation, regeneration and adaptive re-use of the site to bring all the buildings and spaces back in to use, securing a viable community use and lasting future for the buildings. The process has led to this planning and listed buldings application which is for physical alterations to the existing buildings to allow the change of use to be delivered, whilst ensuring the buildings meet all current standards and legislation in terms of accessibailty and saftey - in particular fire safety in terms of adequate emergency escape provision.

The scope of this application therefore builds on the consents already recieved and includes:

- formalise alterations to the building fabric (additions and removals) - largely undertaken by the pervious owners - which may not have obtained the required consents
- proposed alterations to the existing bulidings to allow the church to occupy the spaces for the intended uses and allow safe access for members of the public and the local community
- provision of a roof terrace to the garage building to provide the church with some external amenity space
- removal of outrigger extensions to the south of the drill hall and replacement with a new extension containing upgraded accommodation (and escape) stairs and a new lift providing access for mobility imparied users for the first time

It is anticipated that delivery of the proposals encompassed by this application will likely need to be phased over a longer period to suit both funding and operational requirements.

The proposed alterations to the buildings will enable the church to further develop their extensive worship, community, support, service and outreach work as well as offering a range of spaces for community groups to use for a diverse array of activities, including:

- church services, worship activities, prayer ministry +
- Alpha courses and other faith-based courses
- counselling, advice + support services
- coffee mornings, community meals + social events
- fitness + well-being activities
- concerts + performances
- exhibitions
- drop in sessions
- cafe open to the public
- toddler groups, children's groups + youth work
- meetings, seminars, lectures + conferences
- co-working space

The adaptation of Ardwick Barracks for use by Fabric Church has been designed as an accessible and sustainable building with sensitivity towards the existing heritage features at its core.

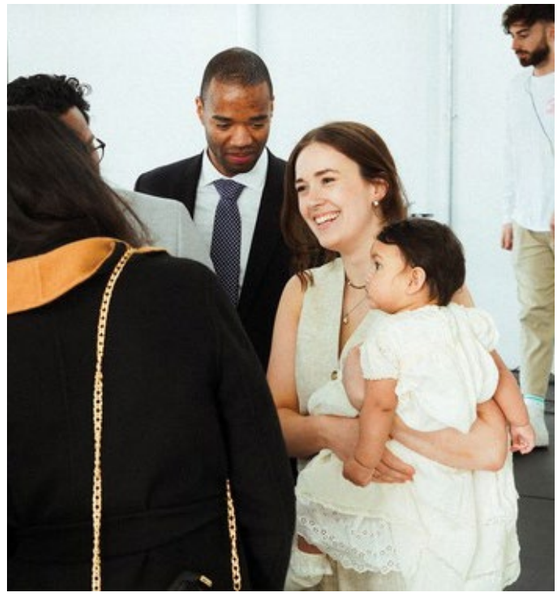
01.02 the client

Fabric Church is part of The Church of England and was formed in September 2023 as a new City Centre Resource Church, in partnership with the Diocese of Manchester and the Church Revitalisation Trust. As part of HTB Network (a group of Anglican churches linked back to Holy Trinity Brompton in London), the Church's aim is to play a part in the evangelisation of the nation, the revitalisation of the Church and the transformation of society. Our vision is for a Church embedded in its neighbourhood, offering spaces, services, facilities and support that serve the local community.









01.03 the team

01.03.01 architect

shedkm is an innovative RIBA Chartered architectural practice working from studios in Liverpool, Manchester and London.

We have built nationally recognised, award winning buildings across all sectors. From highly bespoke private houses to complex, multi-million pound regeneration projects, we produce critically acclaimed, high-quality architecture often from limited budgets and with difficult constraints.

Every project is underpinned by a clarity of thought and consistency of approach. Our work embodies simple yet bold ideas that give our buildings a unique and strong identity.

We are experienced at handling complex briefs, including community buildings with diverse programmes and uses, including multi-award-winning projects Lighthouse Church in Heswall, The Dance Space in Brighton and Southport Pier Pavilion.

shedkm are also adept at bringing neglected historic buildings back in to use, regeneration and creative re-use being the cornerstone of our work from the earliest days of the practice. We have brought many historic and listed buildings back in to use through strategic removal of redundant elements and considered new interventions to unlock a building's potential. Our portfolio of historic building transformation include Collegiate in Liverpool, Eyewitness Works in Sheffield and Kampus in Manchester.

Most recently our Crusader Mill scheme in Manchester won two RIBA North West awards for design and conservation.

The client team competitively tendered for the role of architectural design services and felt that shedkm most effectively captured the ethos of the church and their aspiration for the future regeneration of the buildings at Ardwick Barracks.

01.03.02 consultants

We see architecture as a collaborative pursuit between design team and client. We listen. We take notes. We ask questions. We use a variety of methods to develop a solution that is specific to each client and place.

shedkm has extensive experience in leading multi-disciplinary consultant teams across all scales and sectors. shedkm ensure co-ordination and co-operation within the design team and other contractors by leading regular co-ordination meetings to enable all parties to discuss issues throughout the design and construction process.

The team of consultants for Fabric Church were selected on the basis of their experience with similar building types and previous experience of working together. The team includes:

Project management + cost consultant:
PMC²

Structural + civil engineers:
Hexa Consulting

Services engineers:
Crookes Walker Consulting

Fire engineers:
Design Fire Consultants

Planning consultant:
AshtonHale

Heritage consultant:
Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture

Building control:
Sweco

CDM PD + building regulations PD:
GWP



matchworks refresh
shedkm • PMC² • Crookes Walker • Design Fire



stockport 8
shedkm • Design Fire • Stephen Levrant

01.04 shedkm case studies

Whether working on stand-alone new builds or the refurbishment of historic or listed sites, shedkm's approach has always been the same; we start by identifying what is unique or of special value to a location, and look at what can be nurtured by design, with buildings and spaces that support and strengthen community through rich, varied and inclusive programming.

On this and the following page, we have chosen three examples of our work which strongly demonstrate our experience designing spaces that serve the community, our capability to deliver high quality architecture and our knowledge of Manchester's historic built heritage. The design strategies evident in these case studies will also be applied in our approach to Fabric Church:

Kampus listed warehouses (Manchester)

Lighthouse Church (Heswall, Wirral)
(also with Crookes Walker and PMC²)

Mayfield plot J (Mayfield Park, Manchester)



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key

01 kampus, manchester
02 kampus, manchester
03 kampus, manchester
04 lighthouse church, wirral
05 lighthouse church, wirral
06 illustrative collage of shedkm's mayfield plot j, manchester
07 cgi of shedkm's mayfield plot j, manchester
08 lighthouse church, wirral

Kampus

Kampus is a new residential garden community close to **Manchester** Piccadilly Station. The development comprises several new buildings alongside shedkm's sensitively refurbished historic buildings, consolidating the rich built heritage of the area; a lush garden at its heart significantly contributes to the public realm. A village hall for events and community groups sits alongside the green space, as well as a variety of restaurants, cafés, and bars.

shedkm re-purposed two beautiful Grade II Listed Victorian shipping warehouses. After decades of dereliction Minshull and Minto & Turner have been adapted to provide much needed city centre housing for rent.

Breathing new life into built heritage

shedkm sensitively restored the warehouses to preserve the best of their historic features such as the original cast iron columns and brickwork, whilst creating 58 contemporary loft style apartments. As much as possible of the original fabric, structure and features (such as hoists, external escape stairs and machinery) has been retained and restored, celebrating the industrial heritage of the mills from entrance to apartment. A minimal material palette showcases the red brick, cast iron and exposed timber synonymous with Manchester's built heritage. Internally apartments celebrate an industrial aesthetic with exposed brickwork and timber floorboards and high quality kitchens designed as an 'object within a space'.



Lighthouse Church

Lighthouse Church is designed to provide a renewed Christian presence and sense of community in the heart of Heswall. As churches look to maintain their role in the community and engage an increasingly diverse audience, shedkm has worked closely with the church steering group on the design of a large space designed to accommodate a wide range of community events including concerts, exhibitions, playgroups, youth activities, classes, counselling, advice and community support services. Embracing the concept of welcome and hospitality, our design creates a new open relationship with the existing streetscape and community, with extensive glazing which invites people to step inside. An improved street presence helps to create a sense of place with a strong new identity. Whilst deliberately modern in style, the building has been designed with the historic context and street-scape very much in mind.

A new worship space for the community

shedkm worked closely with The Parish of Heswall to design a new space to replace the existing church and parish hall buildings, which were in poor condition and no longer fit for purpose. Aside from immediate issues of condition and maintenance, there was a lack of physical connection between the two buildings which severely restricted the kind of events and services that could be held, and a lack of interaction with the streets on either side. The design of the new Lighthouse Church provides a building to support and revitalise community usage and engagement and to serve the needs of the parish.



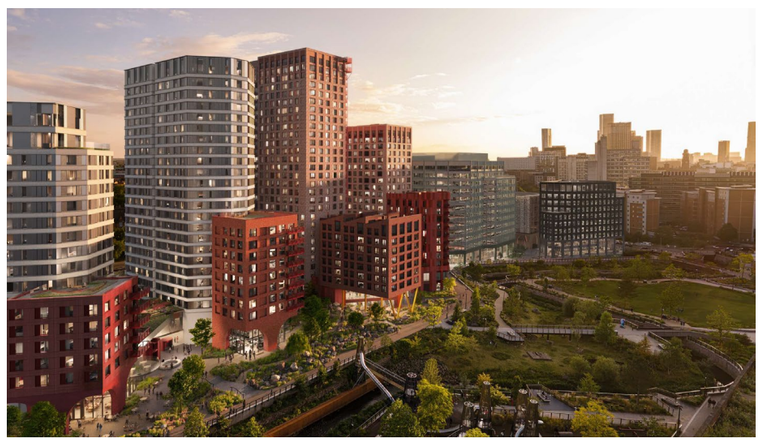
Mayfield

shedkm recently submitted a proposal as part of a scheme to develop a high-quality, mixed-use urban neighbourhood alongside **Manchester's** exciting new Mayfield Park. Situated next to Piccadilly Station, only a quarter of a mile from Fabric Church, the architecture and landscaping strive to weave into and extend the park, further animating the area with people and nature with the provision of new homes, a gym, a cafe and a winter garden.

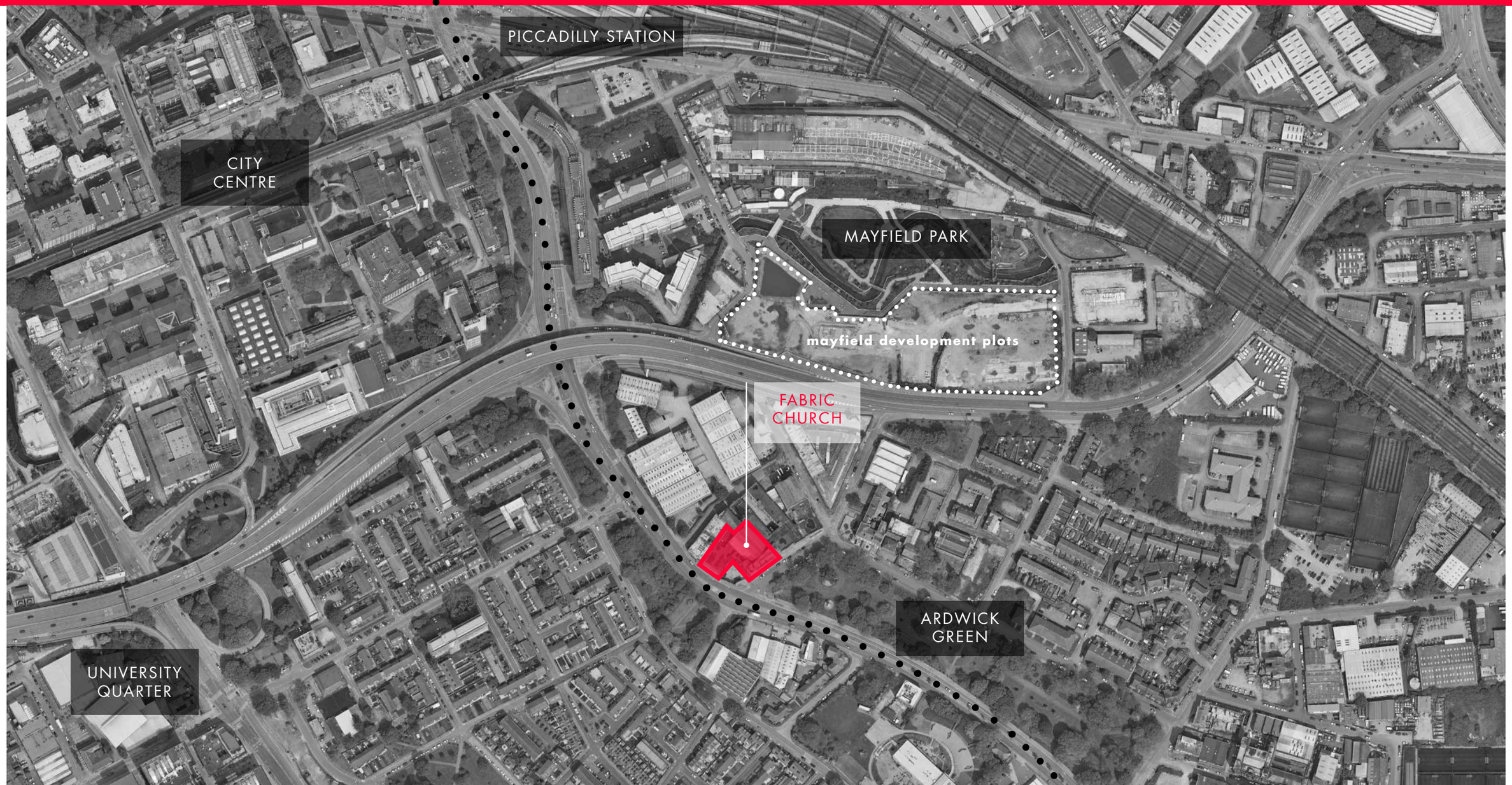
shedkm's buildings on plot J are part of a wider masterplan for new homes, office space, and a multi-modal transport hub featuring the city's biggest cycle park with space for hundreds of bicycles.

A vibrant new urban neighbourhood

The first residential buildings, set across four blocks linked in pairs, each contain a low-rise element and taller tower. Streets will connect the buildings and address site level changes between the Mancunian way at the south of the plot and Mayfield Park to the north. The buildings are staggered in height towards the centre of Mayfield Park and designed in a way that retains as much access to sunlight as possible, while creating a safe and peaceful destination separated from the busy Mancunian Way. Extensive consultation with the local community, visitors to the park and local schools indicated that more park and community space is vital for future of Mayfield and the success of this new community on the doorstep of Fabric Church.



02 the site + existing buildings



02.01 location

The site is located in the neighbourhood of Ardwick, just south of Manchester city centre at the edge of Ardwick Green Park. This park, originally designed as a private recreation ground for the surrounding residents but later adopted for public use, has been at the heart of the neighbourhood since its emergence in the 18th century. Areas of note also in close proximity include the university quarter and the recently developed Mayfield Park, a landmark regeneration project that transformed a derelict piece of land along the railway arches into a vibrant new city-centre park. Future phases of the Mayfield development include new homes, office space and community facilities.

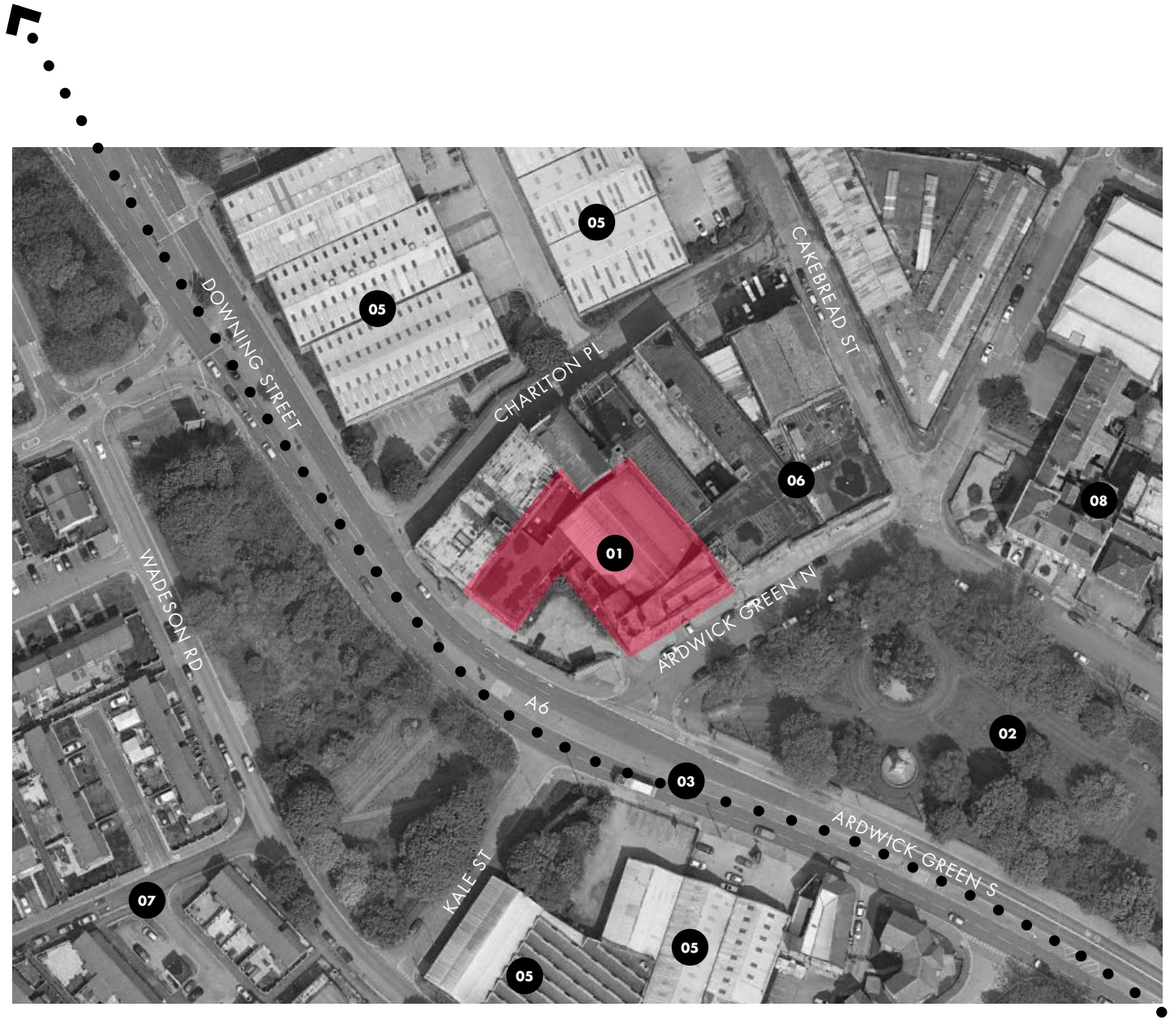
The site is well connected and can be easily accessed on foot or bicycle from these areas and can be reached directly by car or bus from the A6, a key arterial road into the city centre. Manchester Piccadilly Station is also just a 7-minute walk away.

The building as a whole is comprised of a Victorian barracks building and drill hall and a 1950s garage building, as well as some later extensions. The mix of architectural language on display here is reflected in the surrounding built environment which is made up of residential and industrial buildings dating back to the Victorian and Georgian eras as well as more modern developments.

Following a successful change of use application (ref. 136050/FO/2023) in 2023, Fabric Church moved into the building in early 2024, occupying a small part of it whilst embarking on a long term plan to make the rest of the building suitable and safe for occupation. Given the listed status of the building, our proposals seek to be light-touch with any interventions robustly justified on the basis of bringing the building back into use with a design that is both of high architectural quality and compliant with current building regulations and fire safety legislation.

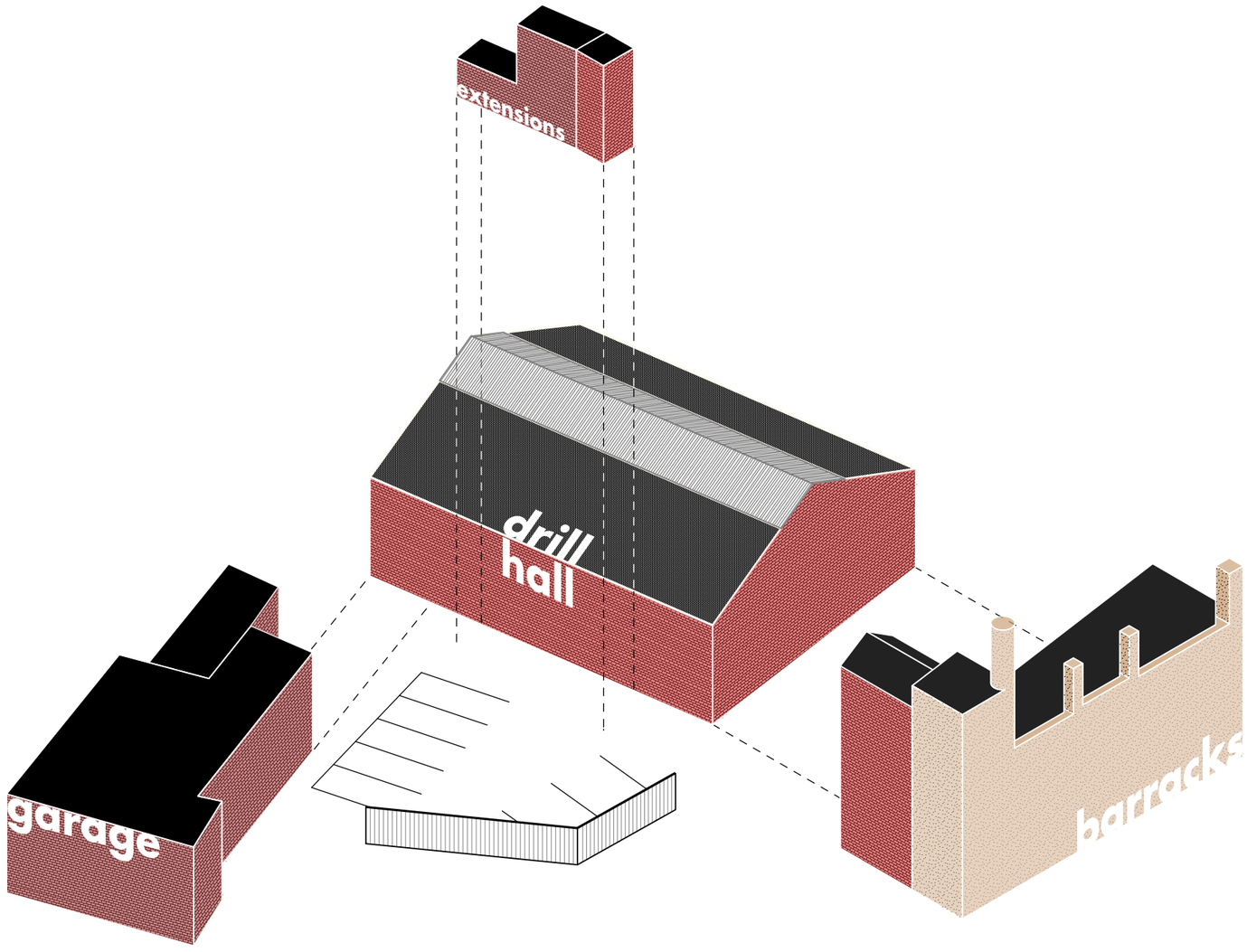
key

01 fabric church (grade II listed)
02 ardwick green park
03 A6
04 manchester piccadilly station
05 modern industrial buildings
06 victorian industrial builidngs
07 modern residential buildings
08 georgian residential buildings





02.02 the buildings



The Ardwick Barracks site comprises the main barracks building fronting onto Ardwick Green, the drill hall immediately behind (with some later extensions attached to the south side) and a 1950s garage/workshop building. The buildings are collectively listed at Grade II.

Part of the site is already in use by Fabric Church following change of use consent, however, the majority of the spaces remain empty, having been unoccupied since the army moved out in 2018.

The Church inherited a building in which many of the spaces are in a poor state of repair, some suffering from years of un-inhabitation and lack of maintenance. Many of the spaces had later additions and finishes stripped out by a previous owner.

On the corner between where the buildings meet, there is a piece of land currently in use as a surface car park - this area is outside of the Church's ownership and our site's boundary.

Planning and listed building consent (ref. 141801/LO/2024has recently been granted for the enabling works to the building which include the replacement of the drill hall roof and roof light of the barracks building. These works will be commencing on site in summer 2025 to make the buildings watertight again.

02.02.01 the drill hall

Constructed in the late-19th century, this part of the building was originally designed and built as a double-height space to facilitate military drill practice, with the light from the roof lights able to flood the space in its entirety.

Whilst it was later subdivided into two storeys in the 1930s to create secure storage and cellular office spaces below, the first floor remains a light-filled, column-free space enclosed by a lightweight roof supported on delicate wrought iron trusses. The overhead daylighting gives the space an ethereal quality and its openness and large, geometric form make it ideal for use as a place of worship capable of accommodating large numbers of people.

Not just for worship, the quality of the space lends itself well to large events in general and will be available to the wider community for hire. The benefits of this are twofold: firstly, it will be instrumental in the financial upkeep of the building and, secondly, it will form part of the church's broader ambition for the building to become a community hub.

In addition to the quality of light, the other key feature of the space are the elegant and light weight roof trusses, and the approved roof replacement works hard to keep these intact without significant additional strengthening. These proposals look to retain the trusses and thread new lighting, ventilation and other services through the trusses in a low impact, reversible way that clearly expresses the new elements.

Key design challenges include a 1m level change between this space and the first floor of the barracks building, managing acoustic separation of the drill hall and achieving access and escape for large numbers of people compliant with current fire safety regulations.

The ground floor of the drill hall has suffered as a result of the subdivison and is largely devoid of natural light. Whilst not a priority for things like storage rooms, designing pleasent and high quality spaces depends significantly on access to natural light. With a vision for the large, open space to the south (pictured) to become a cafe, exploring strategies to maximise daylighting has been prioritised in the design process.

The ground floor will also be upgraded and fitted out to accommodate co-working spaces, toilets, and a variety of spaces for church and community use. The ceiling will be lined throughout to provide fire and acoustic separation to the drill hall above, but the existing columns will be retained and left exposed, together with surviving areas of original parquet flooring where possible.













02.02.02 barracks building

This part of the building has its principal facade fronting onto Ardwick Green. The facade is formed of coursed sandstone and it features a four-storey tower, the upper levels of which (combined with those of the four-storey brick structure attached behind) house an apartment which originially would have been occupied by the caretaker. Other rooms here that formed part of the original design included an armoury room, offices, stores, toilets + showers, and mess rooms.

With the exception of the apartment, inside the barracks building more of the original fabric and historic features survive than in other parts of the buidlings. The staircase and its balustrade are original, and in the stairwell there is evidence of original glazed tiles beneath the later and somewhat institutional paintwork. Many of the windows in the barracks building are original (again, with the exception of the apartment). Some original doors and flooring survive, alongside some fire places (although these have mostly been blocked up).

Not only are these features of high value in terms of the building's character, they are also of high heritage significance which means that any alterations must be carefully considered and justified. Our proposals here, therefore, must strive to be light-touch, optimising the existing quality of each space and filling each with an appropriate new use. Original featues will be retained and restored where possible and new interventions clearly expressed. The proposals seek to occupy the rooms in the barracks building with a variety of meeting and multi-function rooms available for church and community use, co-working space and upgraded toilets.

The aforementioned apartment will be retained and upgraded to modern standards with a new kitchen, bathrooms and finishes.





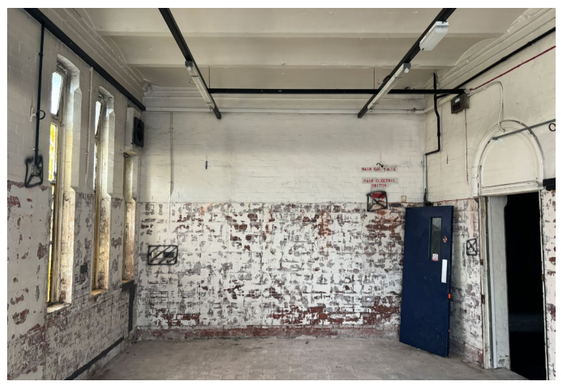














02.02.03 1950s garage

Built in 1956, the garage - which forms an extension of the drill hall and is orientated perpendicular to that building with a frontage on to Downing Street - demonstrates the need for change and expansion during the post-war period. It is a flat-roofed structure with two storeys, the ground floor of which was designed for vehicles and the first floor for offices.

Today, the majority of the ground floor functions as an internal car park for those building users who need to travel by car (a condition of the change of use consent). Beyond the car park, new toilets have been added, but the workshop doors and vehicle inspection pit have been retained. Modern light fittings and other services have been added.

The first floor offices have been converted into an open plan space which currently serves as a multi-function room for things like worship, courses, conferences, meetings and is available as weekday community co-working space. The space has been simply decorated and modern services have been added in a light-touch, reversible manner and left exposed to express them as modern interventions and retain the character of the space.

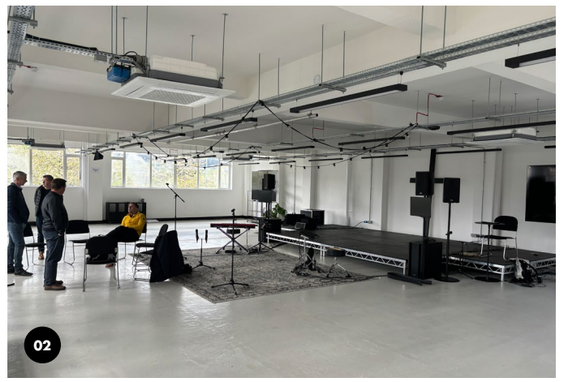
One of the biggest complexities in bringing the whole building back into use and to current legislation is the level change that exists between the drill hall and the garage - the ground floor of the garage sits about 1 metre lower than that of the rest of the ground floor which poses challenges around accessibility across these different parts of the building. The location of the new lift and stairs has been dictated by trying to navigate these level changes.

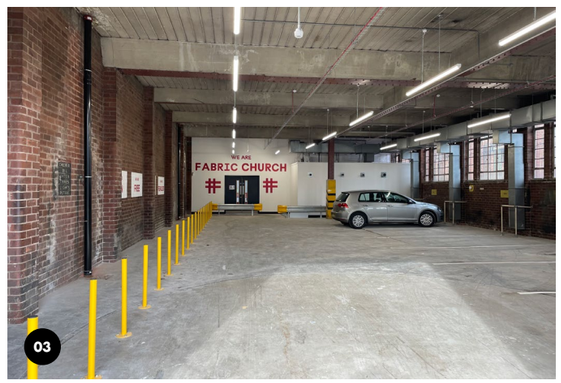
key

01 exterior
02 first floor
03 ground floor



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02



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02.02.04 drill hall extensions

Originally built as a double height space, a first floor was later introduced to the drill hall as well as some utilitarian red brick single and two storey extensions to the south west facade. These additions housed a shower block on the ground level and toilets and a kitchen at first floor. All of these rooms have since been stripped of fittings and finishes and are currently unoccupied. They are of low-to-no heritage significance.

These additions are evidence of the changing nature of the facilities at Ardwick Barracks, with the building constantly being altered and adapted by the army in response to changing needs and demands. Many of these alterations were done in a basic and utilitarian manner in response to an operation need, with little thought to aesthetic concerns or heritage considerations.

We investigated the retention of these structures for the installation of one of the necessary new stairs, however, this was deemed un-viable for various reasons. Firstly, the dimensions of the existing structure is insufficient both for accommodating the stair width required for use as an escape stair and for provision of a disabled refuge space. And, secondly, installation of a stair here requires the removal of the floor which would weaken the walls - ultimately, rendering them inadequate for load-bearing and necessitate the introduction of secondary steel structure. Together with the low architectural quality of the extensions and low heritage significance, these extensions were identified as elements for removal, their strategic demolition allowing the building to be unlocked for a more successful re-purposing.


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02.03 history

Refer to Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture's Heritage Statement for a more detailed analysis of the historical development and significance of the site - this is intended as a brief synopsis only.

Ardwick Green

During the 18th century, the principal focus of the emerging township of Ardwick was 'Ardwick Green'. The three-acre recreation ground was originally created for private, residential use. It was fenced with low wooden posts, iron railings and gated entrances, keys for which were owned by the residents.

Ardwick Barracks

Situated directly opposite Ardwick Green and its western end, is Ardwick Barracks - an army building comprising accommodation, offices, an armoury, stores and, most significantly, a drill hall. Drill halls became a common building typology across the UK during the 19th century following the emergence of the Rifle Volunteer Movement. As part of this movement, the Ardwick Battalion was formed in 1859 and they later acquired the site at Ardwick Green, moving into the newly-built premises there in the late-19th century. The building survives, with the impressive castellated Gothic frontage - stylistically typical of drills halls of its era - remaining a striking addition to the streetscape to this day.


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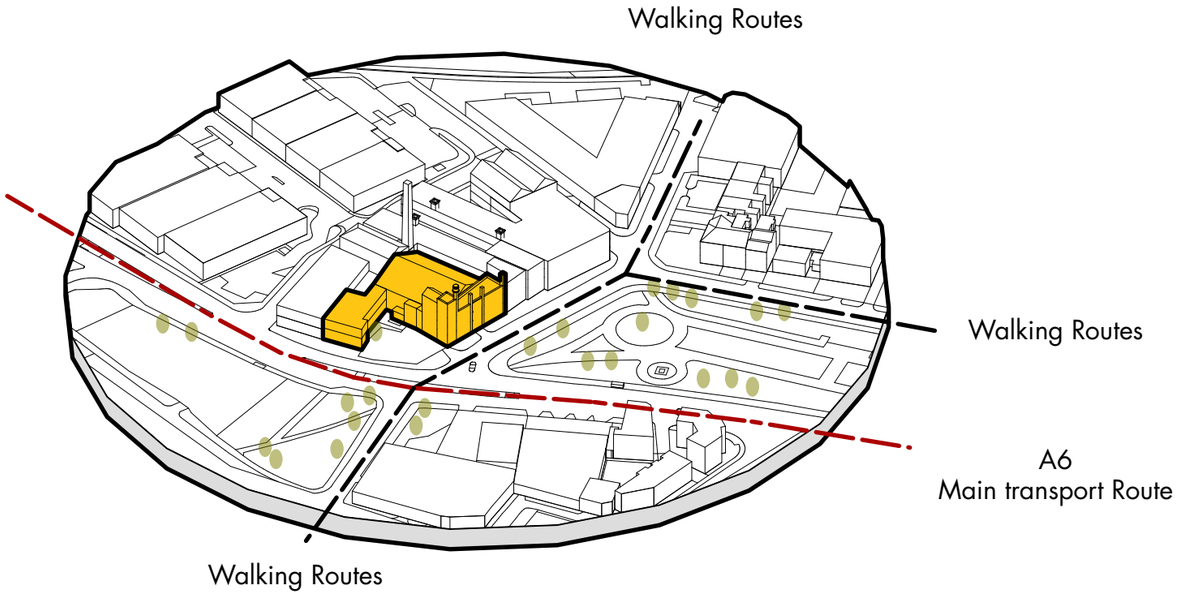
01 Ardwick Green, photographed in 1955
02 The principal facade of the new headquarters/drill hall fronting onto Arwick Green North, photographed in 1958
03 Officers of the 8th battalion defence force, photographed in the drill hall in 1921

02.04 site analysis

02.04.01 walking routes

With the site's proximity to the university quarter and the majority of the congregation/those expected to make use of the church and its associated community spaces residing in the local catchment area, most of the users can - and already do - arrive **on foot.** The church has been keeping records of the modes of travel used by its visitors.

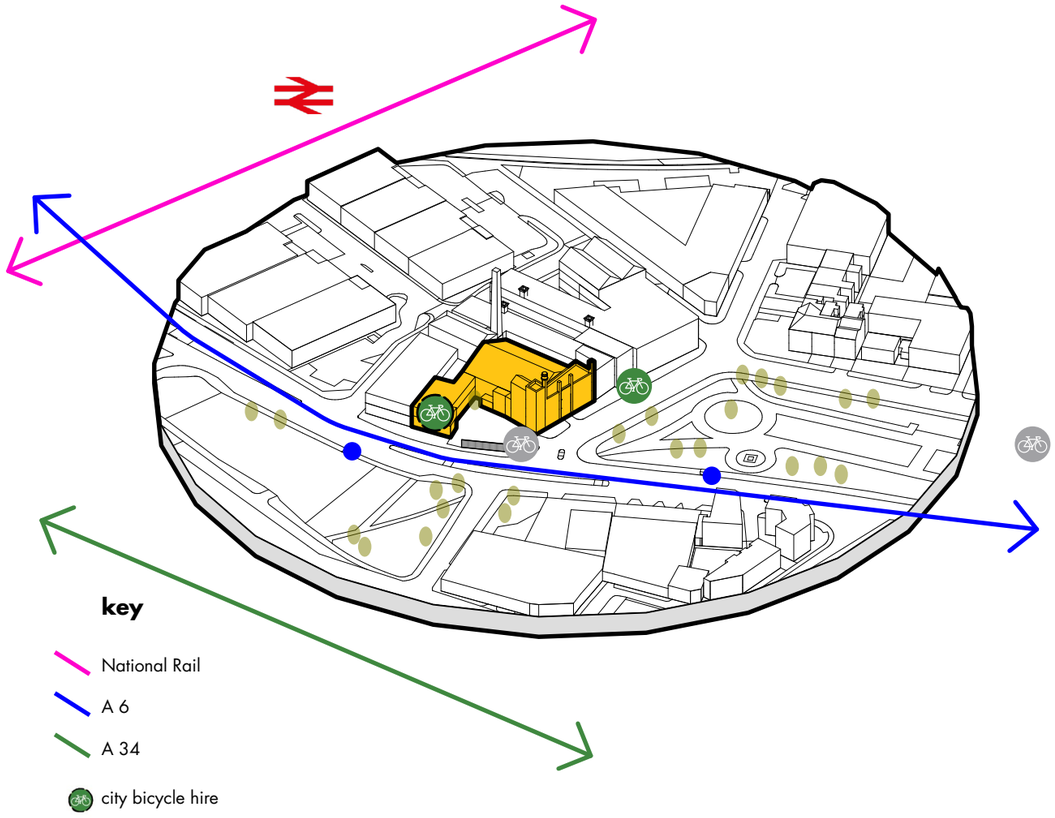
The provision of bicycle storage as well as an existing Bee Network cycle hire station on site make **cycling** another viable option.



02.04.02 transport links

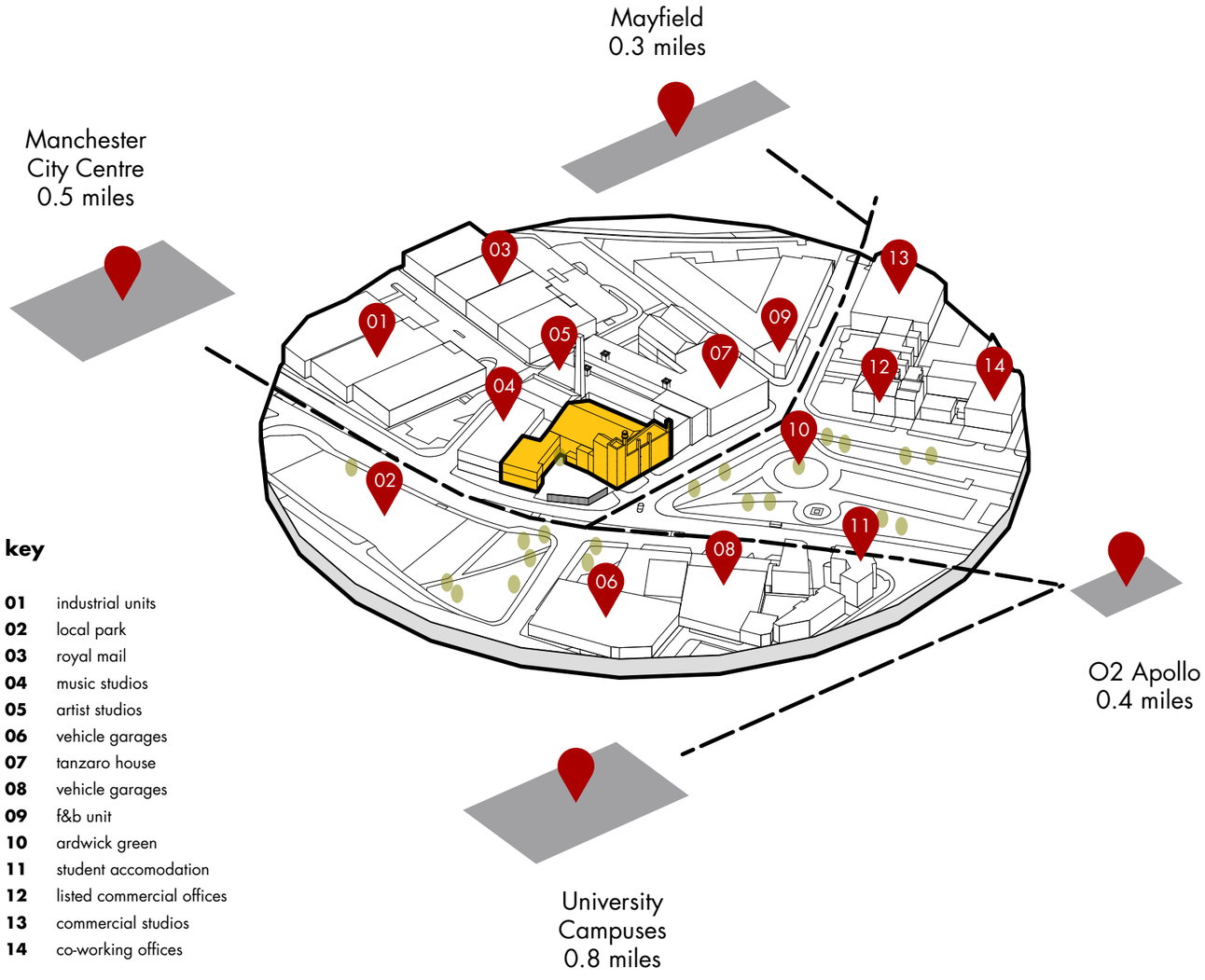
The site can be easily accessed by public transport. It is conveniently located along the A6 and close to the A34 - two main arterial roads into Manchester along which public bus routes operate. For those arriving by train into Piccadilly Station, the site is less than a 10-minute walk away.

The proximity to these main roads means that the site may also by accessed by car for those who need to.



02.04.03 surrounding neighbourhood

The immediate local neighbourhood is made up of an eclectic mix of commercial units with various uses. Residential use is predominate beyond the immediate vicinity of the site.

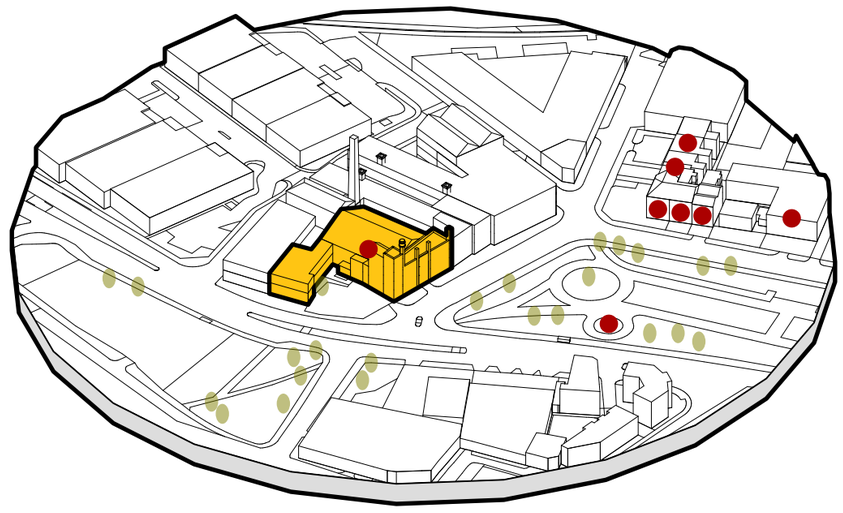


key

01 industrial units
02 local park
03 royal mail
04 music studios
05 artist studios
06 vehicle garages
07 tanzaro house
08 vehicle garages
09 f&b unit
10 ardwick green
11 student accomodation
12 listed commercial offices
13 commercial studios
14 co-working offices

02.04.04 heritage assets

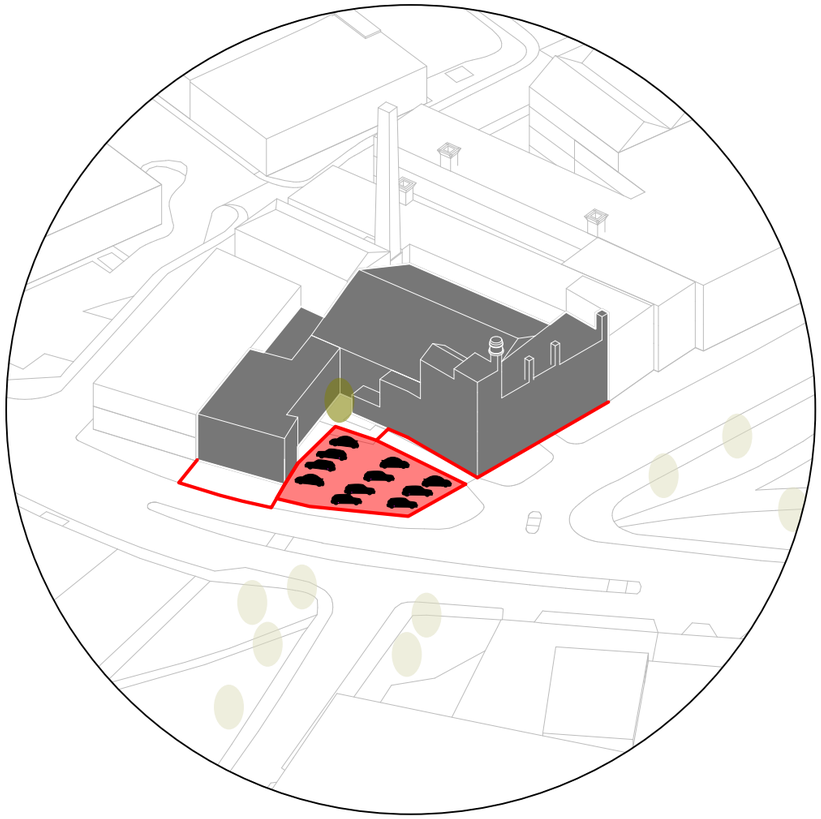
The existing drill hall is Grade II listed, celebrating the military significance of drill hall architecture. Equally important, the war memorial that sits in Ardwick Green sits as a reminder of those from the area who gave their lives during the Great Wars.



● Grade II Listed Buildings

02.04.05 site boundary

The site boundary encompasses the barracks building, drill hall and garage. On the corner, slotted between the point at which the barracks building/drill hall and garage meet is a piece of land - currently in use as a surface car park - which is outside of our site boundary, but over which the church has some right of way for access and egress.

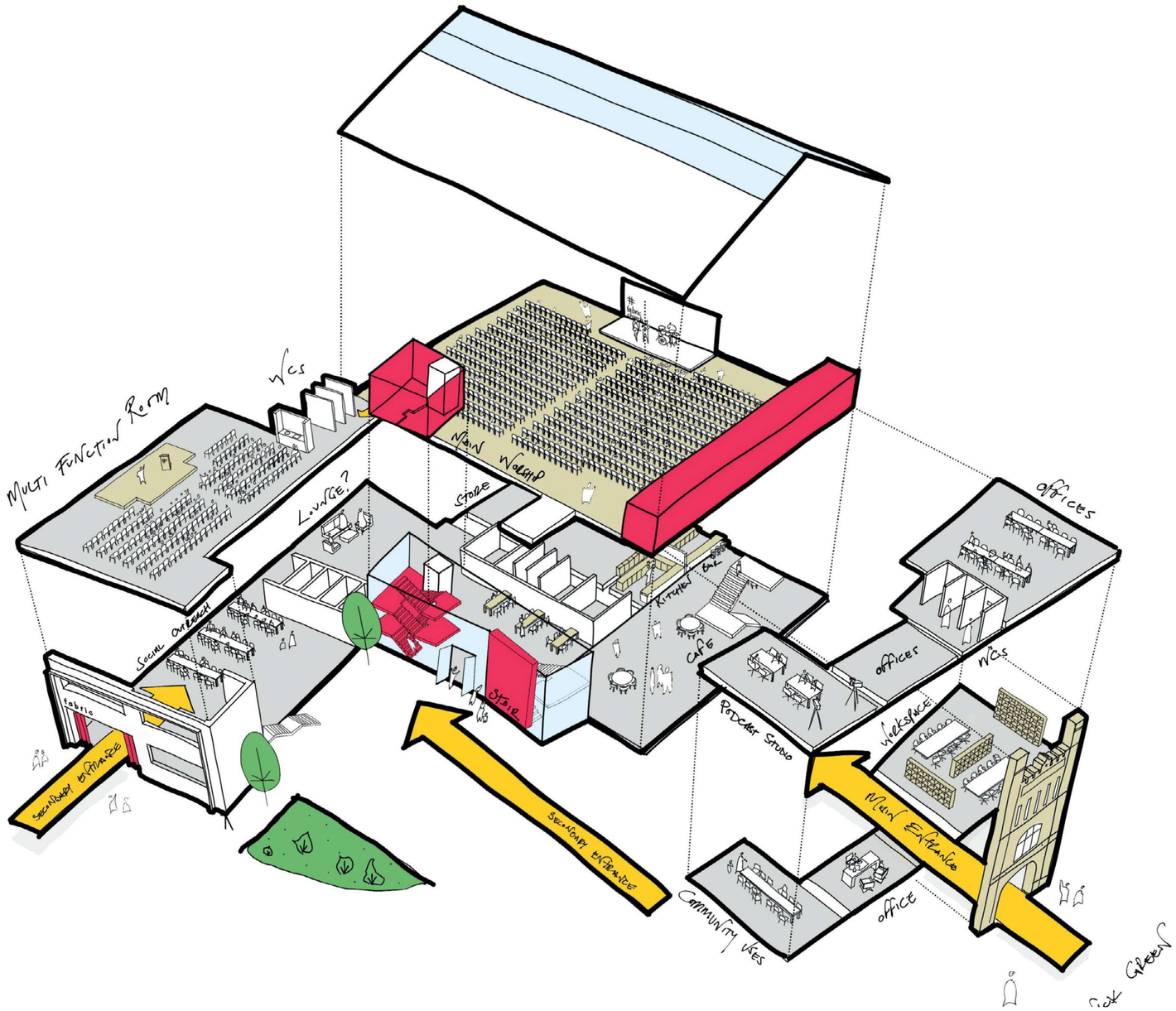


02.04.06 existing entrances

Currently, there are two main entrances to the building - one to the garage on Downing Street and the other to the castellated frontage of the barracks building on to Ardwick Green North. Since the garage is the only part of the building that is currently occupied, the entrance to this part of the building is the only one that is actively used.



03 design development



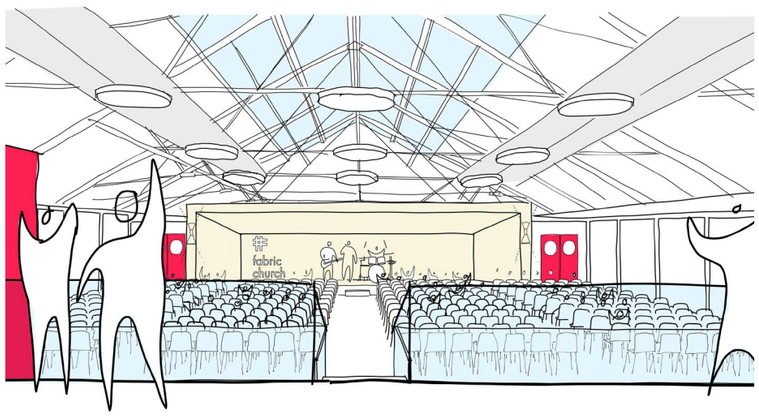
03.01 forming the brief

Breathing new life into Manchester heritage

03.01.01 project aims

The primary objectives of the project are:

- to provide the rapidly growing church with the larger spaces it needs to house its thriving congregation
- to release additional group rooms to house the church's flourishing childrens and youth work
- provide suitable accommodation to support the church's expanding social outreach and community support programmes
- to repair, conserve and enhance the existing listed buildings
- bring the buildings back in to full use, providing public access for the first time
- secure the buildings' long term future with a vibrant and sustainable use
- embed the site within the Ardwick Green neighbourhood with daily community use, becoming a much needed neighbourhood hub
- reconfigure the internal layout to improve accessibility and visitor facilities



03.01.02 constraints + opportunities

Having explored the existing buildings and surrounding context, we believe there is a real opportunity to create an inspiring top-lit worship space under the very special roof of the existing drill hall. And in the longer term to refurbish the rest of the buildings with a wide range of much-needed community amenity spaces that will see the church become a focal point of neighbourhood life in Adrwick.

Circulation + access

From our first visit it became clear that resolving the circulation and access arrangements would be key to unlocking the buildings' potential and delivering a successful outcome. The challenges were threefold.

Firstly, the existing circulation was convoluted and confusing making the buildings difficult to navigate around. Secondly, varied level changes and no lift or ramp provision meant the buildings were largely inaccessible to wheelchair users and others with mobility issues, severely restricting accessibility and inclusivity. And finally, the two main large spaces being on the first floor adds complexity to the fire escape strategy putting pressure on the staircase provision. It was clear from the outset that the existing stairs fell well short of current standards and regulations.

Ascertaining the required number, size and position of escape stairs became an early priority and defined the key strategic moves. This challenge was further complicated by the constrained nature of the site with few opportunities to locate new stairs with the required direct access to a final exit. From our first sketches, we anticipated the need to strip away some of the later additions to the south west of the drill hall to allow a new entrance, lift and stairs to be added to allow safe and effective fire escape and disabled access.

Phasing

The second challenge was to consider the various phases likely to be necessary for the implementation of the proposals, and keeping the church operational throughout these (church operation + activity at the site has previously been consented under application reference 136050/FO/2023), whilst maintaining appropriate safe emergency escape and access to the necessary spaces and support facilities. . The church's urgent need for more space needed to be balanced by an understanding of the longer term aspirations for the entire site so that initial phases did not preclude or compromise later developments.

Availability of space

Ardwick Barracks is a big building with a considerable amount of internal floor space. This is both a constraint and an opportunity for a project like this.

The opportunity is that there is an abundance of space to accommodate a wide range of activities and community facilities which will assist the church in developing its outreach and service activities and achieving its aspiration to be a real neighbourhood resource.

The challenge is the inevitable cost of refurbishing so much internal area, especially within the constraints of a listed building. The proposals are likely to be delivered in phases to assist with funding and whilst there will be some conservation/restoration work to the barracks building façade, internal spaces will take a light-touch fit out approach, stripping out more modern finishes, replacing with a clam, neutral material palette of new finishes and inserting new exposed services in a way that expresses the new intervention.

For the most part, internal spaces have suffered from years of institutional use but possess the bones of flexible good quality spaces - high ceilings, good daylighting - which will be cleaned up have new finishes applied and new services installed rather than meticulous conservation. The ground floor spaces below the drill hall always represented the biggest challenge, being largely land-locked and suffering from a lack of natural light.

Original character

The existing buildings represent one of the greatest opportunities for this project; there is a lot of value in the character of the existing buildings; in particular the facade, stair case and internal spaces in the barracks building. The drill hall stands out for the quality of light in the top-lit, column-free space, and the roof trusses are clearly an elegant feature worth retaining. There are many smaller features throughout the buildings that merit being retained, cleaned and restored - these will be explored in more detail as each phase progresses into detailed design.

The majority of spaces will benefit from being treated simply; the layers of institutional finishes and unsympathetic services stripped back, robust new finishes applied and new services sensitively inserted will transform these rooms.

03.01.03 initial thoughts

These sketches were from our original bid presentation in the client's competitive selection process for an architect for the project. The ideas for the site were developed before dialogue with the client team but many of the strategic moves and aspiration remain relevant.

key

01 **Front of House**
An impressive and formal façade stands proud at the western end of Ardwick Green Park, 'ALWAYS READY'… an apt motto for its past and future uses. The generous ground floor spaces, flooded with natural light and blessed with views across the park make for a welcoming café, library/book shop and other community facilities.

02 **The Workshop**
A large, flexible and practical space that could provide a service to the community (once the cars are removed), offering shelter, food, practical courses and a listening ear.

03 **The Upper Room**
Kid's church space occupies the upper level of this building in a flexible configuration that can accommodate a variety of groups for different ages, separate from the main worship space.

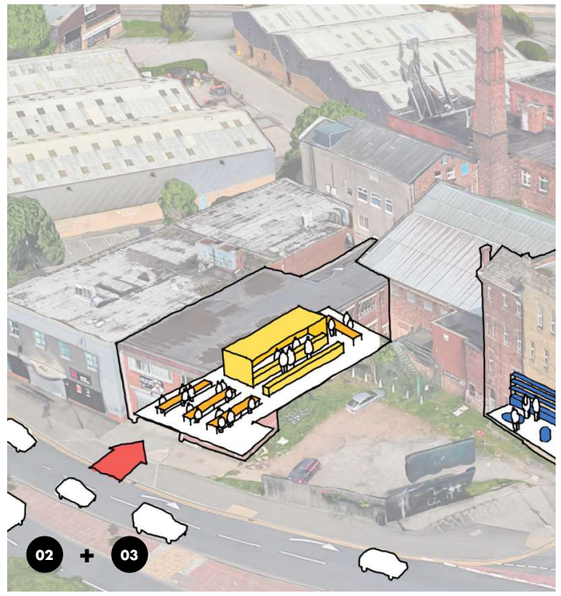
04 **The Main Event**
A vast, column free space that could host all sorts of large events, from religious services to orchestral / choral concerts and theatrical productions. At present only accessible through other buildings and with non-compliant escape routes.

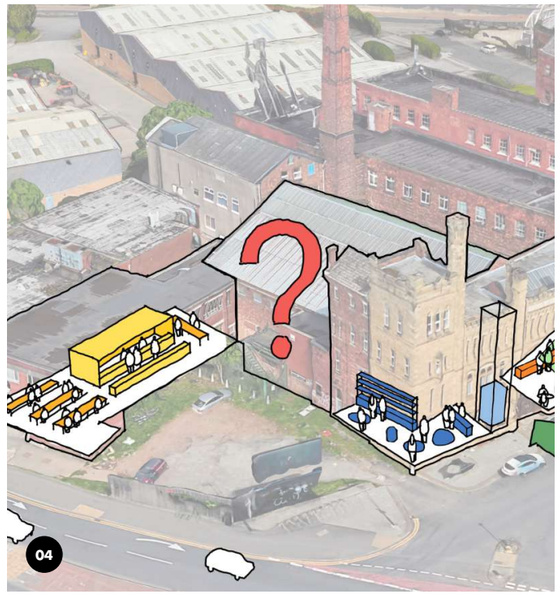
05 **Unlocking the drill hall**
Giving the main space it's own public face, providing welcoming and safe access for all, accommodating new escape routes, allowing light deep into the building and announcing the a new era in the building's history. The three major elements of the building can function independently or together, as required. The new entrance and circulation allows the drill hall to be completed early and operate safely whilst later phases are undertaken.

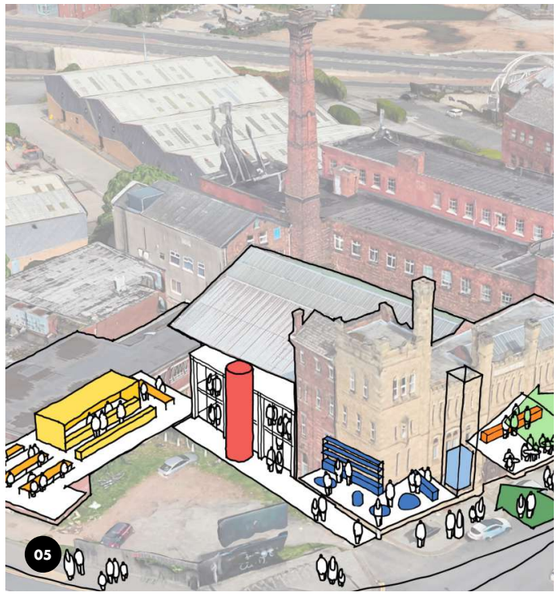
06 **Upgrading the drill hall**
The elegant bow string structure of the drill hall is restored, insulation and new glazing added to improve the environmental credentials of the building to meet modern standards. A sculptural 'object' is added to the space, creating a stage and support spaces, potentially with a mezzanine level in the roof space.

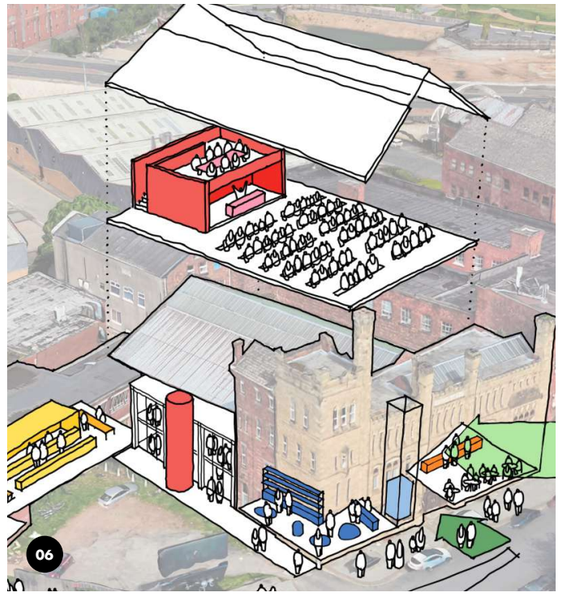
07 **A community garden**
The space between the three major elements of the building is currently used as a car park, but has the potential to become a wonderful south-facing community garden through which visitors enter the worship space and which other activities and spill out into … the courtyard garden could accommodate an orchard and community growing spaces that serve the soup kitchen and foodbank; it could be a place to read a book from the library and enjoy a coffee from the café; on summer sundays it could be a space for outdoor worship and lunches, inviting the community in.

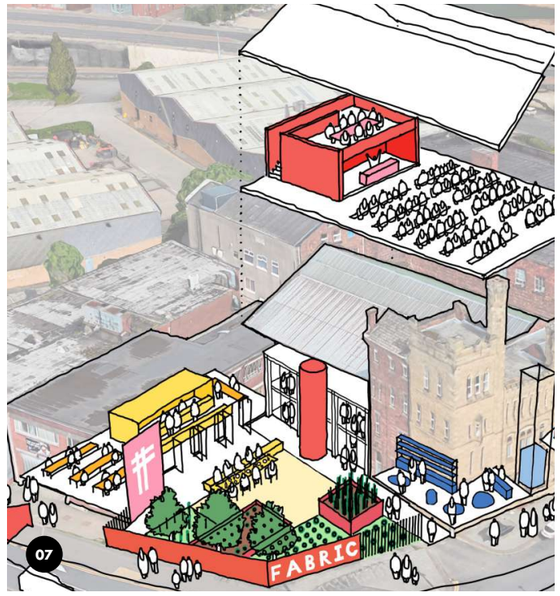










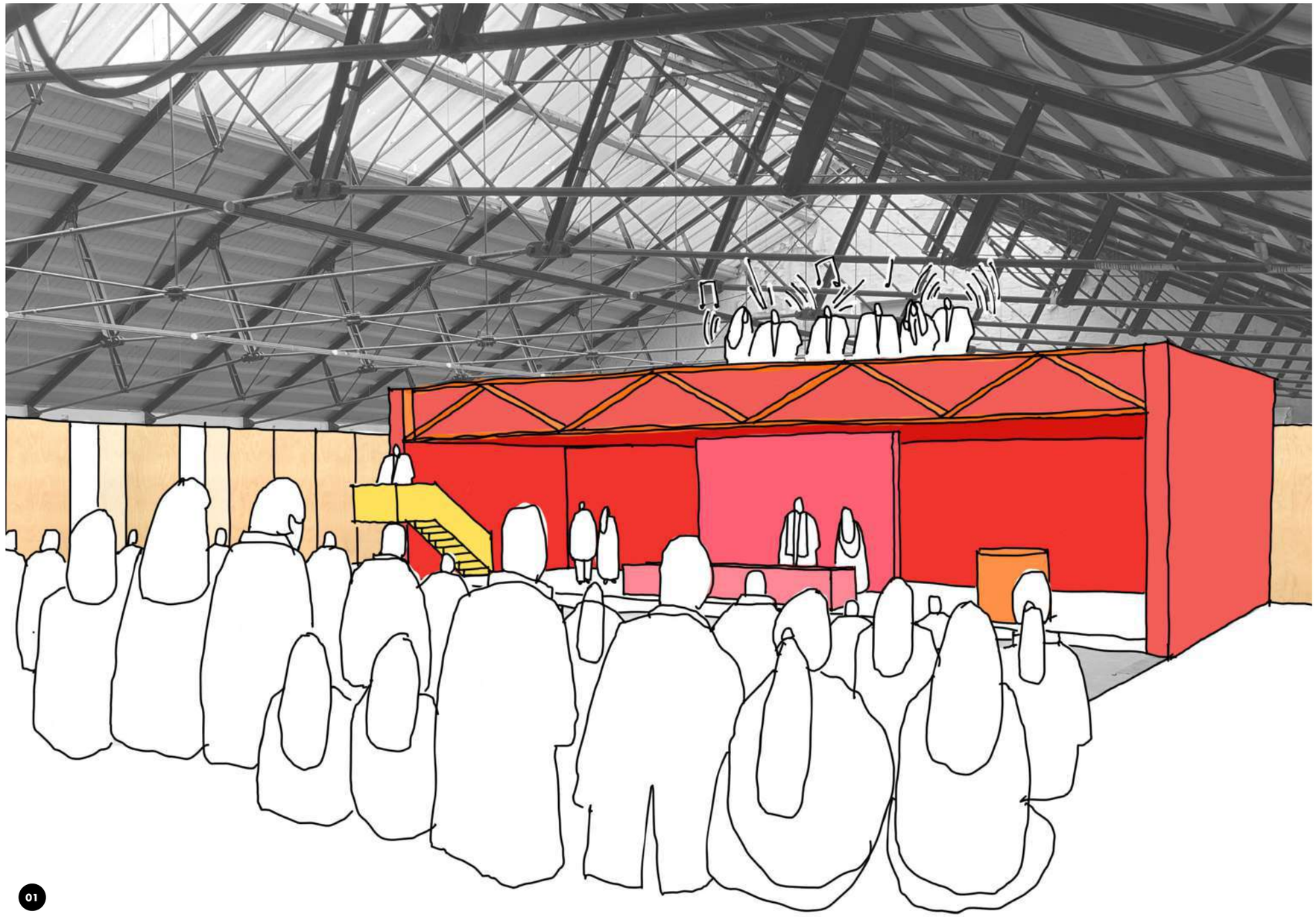


The drill hall is a fantastic space with a good quality of daylight and interesting historic roof structure. It will make an ideal space for worship with the ability to be configured flexibly to accommodate a range of different worship styles and other events. The challenge is by virtue of its location at first floor level, which adds an extra level of complexity to making the space accessible and meeting current fire safety regulations in terms of means of escape. The drill hall is locked between the barracks building facing Ardwick Green and the workshop building fronting Downing Street with the only access currently through either of these buildings, with no disabled access. There is an opportunity to give the drill hall its own welcoming entrance on the south west facade, incorporating best practice standards of accessibility and providing the hall with fire escapes compliant with current regulations. A new entrance would allow the drill hall to operate independently, consistent with the client's aspiration for community spaces to be able to function separately. The new circulation would also allow the drill hall to continue to operate during subsequent phases of work to the other buildings.

Our proposals hinge around adding modern interventions containing lift and stairs to allow the building to safely accommodate visitors, improve accessibility and legibility, whilst meeting modern fire safety regulations. These new elements allow the light-filled first floor drill hall to become the main worship space, with a welcoming community cafe below, accessed through the restored original entrance. Existing spaces will be re-purposed as community and outreach spaces, including co-working space, children and youth activity spaces, meeting rooms and multi-function rooms for hire.

key

01 View from the southern end of the drill hall towards the new stage/altar. The bow string roof structure would be sensitively restored and improved roof lights and thermal insulation added. The walls would be lined with panels, improving acoustic and thermal performance.



01

03.02 key moves

Church operation + activity at the site has previously been consented under application reference 136050/FO/2023

03.01.04 overview

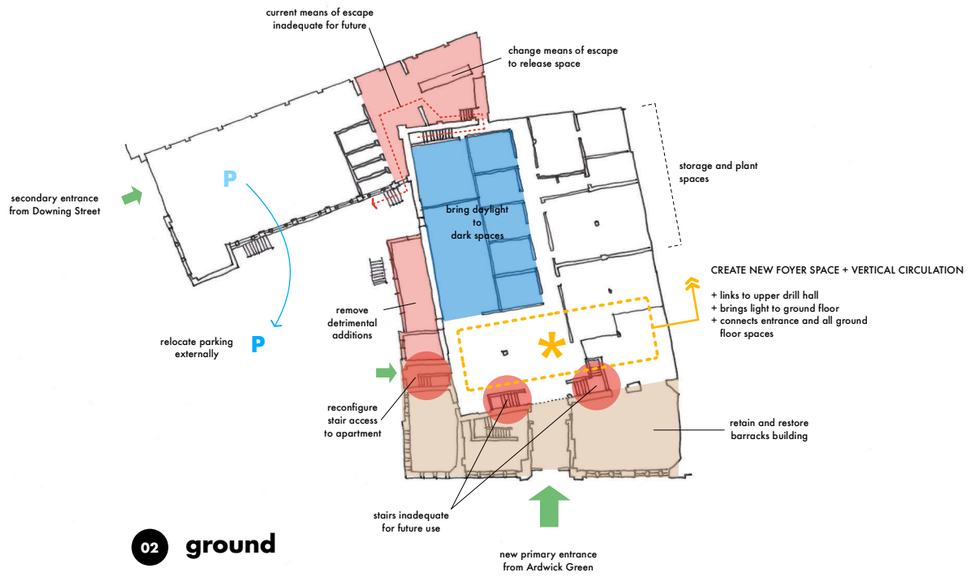
From the project's inception, our design aspirations have remained the same:

- bringing light to a very dark ground floor drill hall space which is enclosed on all sides
- making accessible as far as possible a building with a number of split levels and listed building constraints
- restoring and bringing life back into key heritage features and spaces
- creating welcoming entrance spaces with a clear system of circulation, enabling both a calm flow of people and the option to compartmentalise parts of the building for concurrent use by different groups of people (congregation and the wider community)
- providing safe means of escape (adequate number of escape stairs in appropriate locations) to accommodate the number of people expected to occupy the space at any given time
- making a bold new statement on the building's exterior to act as a beacon for the church

We have worked through a number of different iterations in an effort to find the best solution to each challenge with often conflicting interests at play (e.g. adequate means of escape, accessibility, heritage).



01 **first**



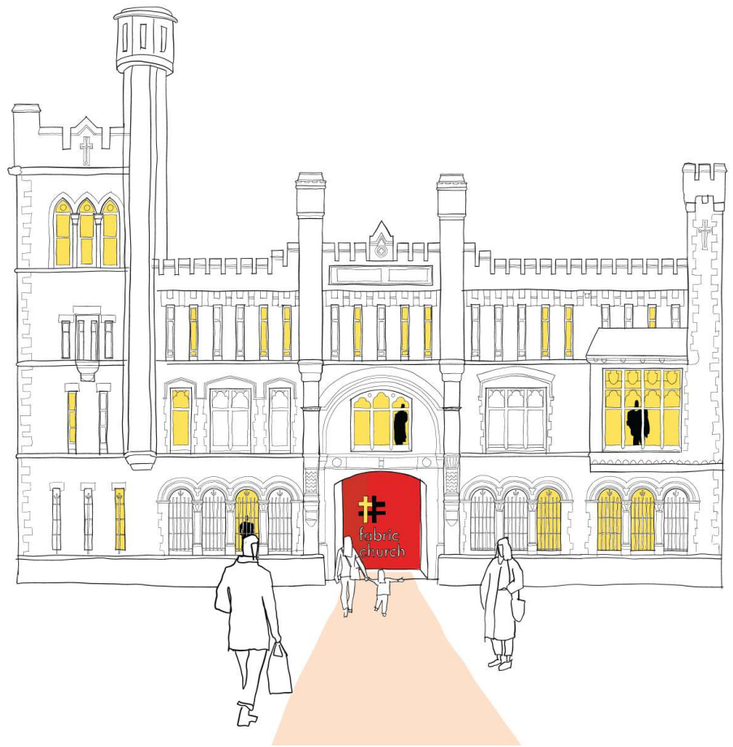
02 **ground**

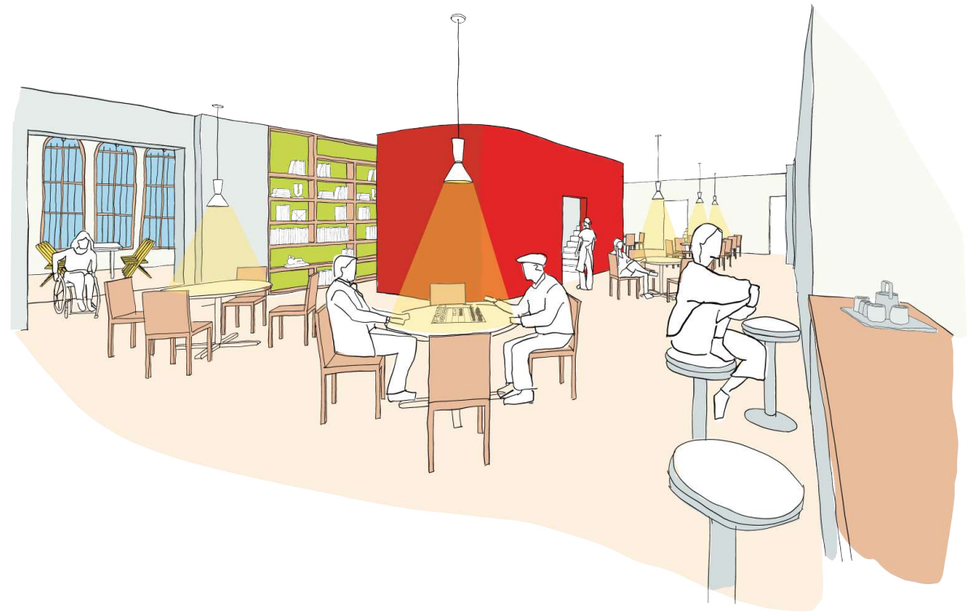
key

01 Early diagram highlighting broad design moves at ground floor level
02 Early diagram highlighting broad design moves at first floor level

03.02.01 illustrative sketches

The gothic castellated frontage facing Ardwick Green - originally designed as the principal facade - will be brought back to life by reinstating its impressive entrance and filling the rooms with vibrant activity

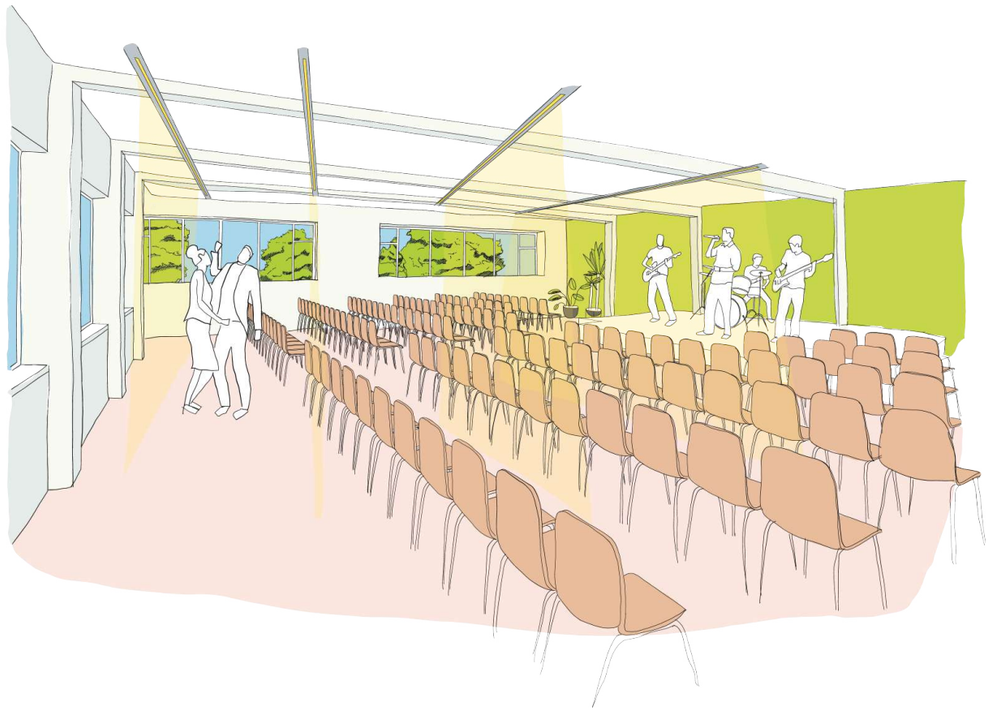




The dark and uninviting ground floor spaces will be transformed by introducing daylight where possible, improving connectivity between spaces and the considered introduction of artifical light; the main space becomes the hub of the building, enlivened with a spacious cafe welcoming in the wider community thoughtout the week

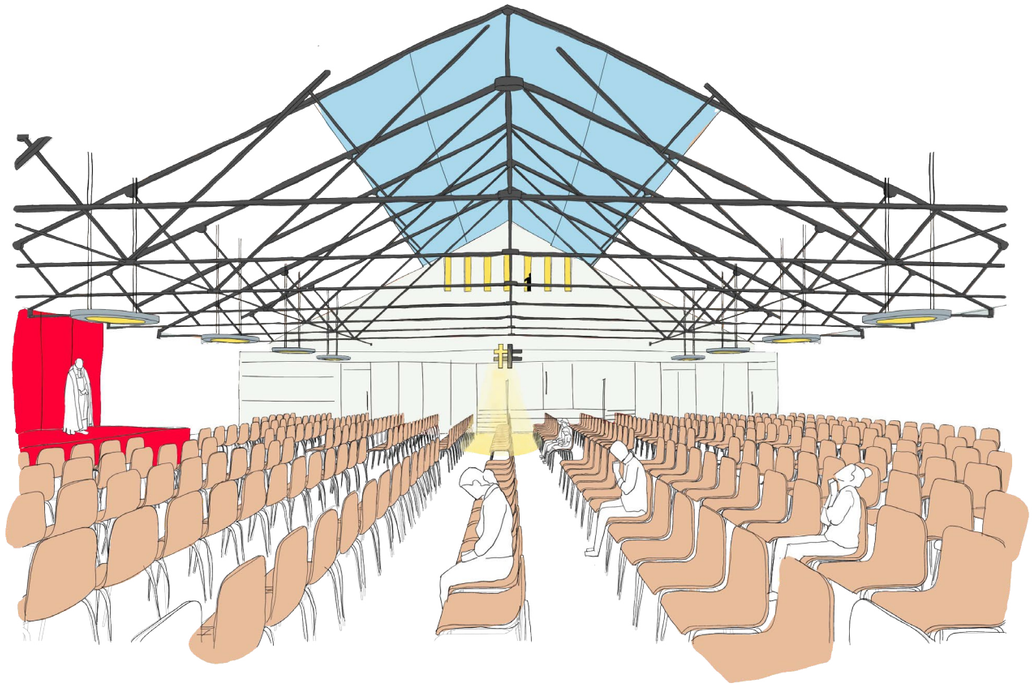
Part of the long-term vision is for the ground floor internal car park to be put to better use with children's activities and/or social outreach services and provide a welcoming new frontage to Downing Street.
(These works are not part of this application)

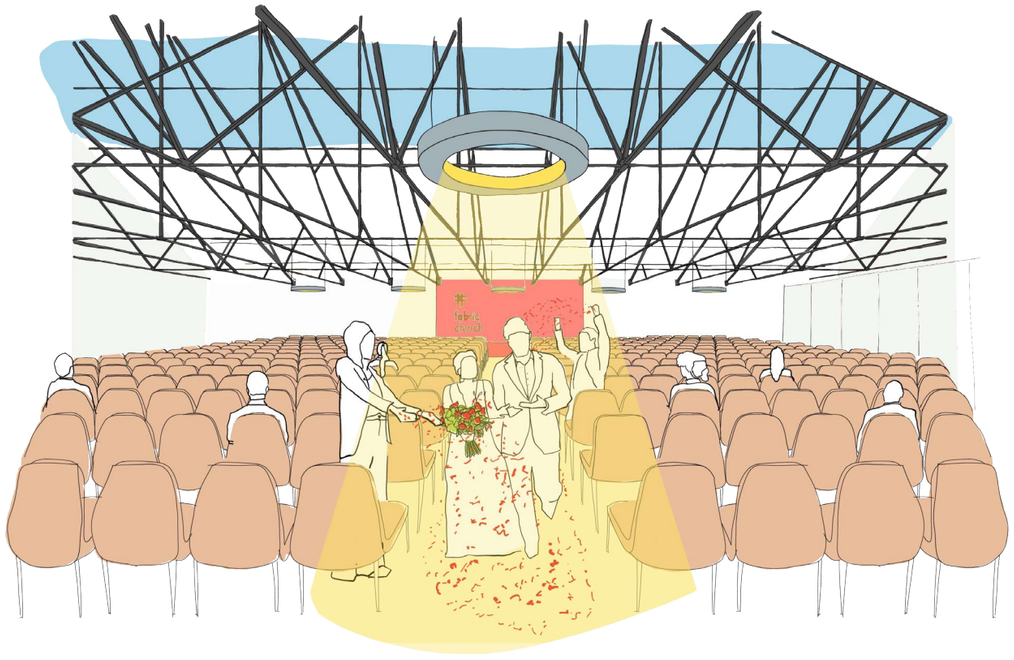




The first floor of the garage building will continue to be used as a flexible open-plan space capable of serving a variety of functions; minor alterations will provide enhanced facilities for users and improve access and escape

The large, column-free first floor of the drill hall will be used as the main worship space ...



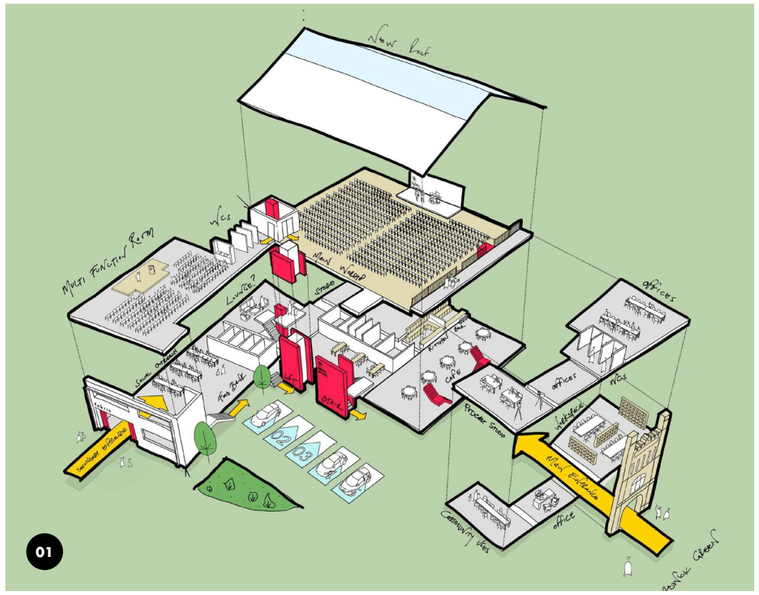


... as well as for events like weddings and conferences

03.03 pre-application meeting

20th May 2024

shedkm, the client and some of the wider design team met with Manchester City Council [MCC] in July 2024 to discuss proposals for Fabric Church and to explore the site. The main discussion points pertained to heritage, the roof and building use. Overall the meeting was positive with the Council supportive of the aspiration and approach.


New Roof
WCs
Main Hall
Lounge
Stage
Fire Exit
Kitchen
Office
Office
Office

03.04 public consultation

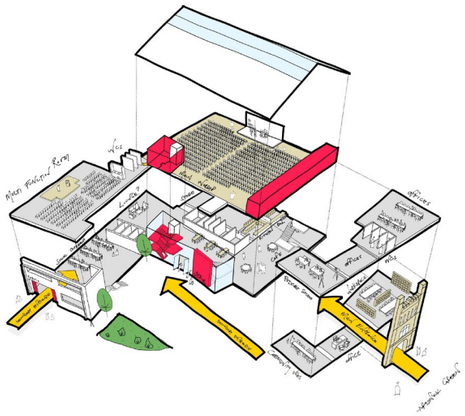
26th March 2025

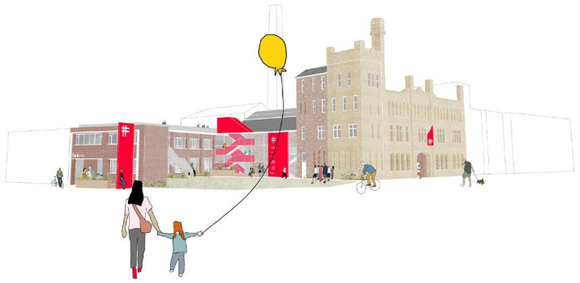
fabric church

FABRIC CHURCH

Fabric Church is part of The Church of England and was formed in September 2023 as a new City Centre Resource Church, in partnership with the Diocese of Manchester and the Church Revitalisation Trust.

As part of HTB Network (a group of Anglican churches linked back to Holy Trinity Brompton in London), the Church's aim is to play a part in the evangelisation of the nation, the revitalisation of the Church and the transformation of society. Our vision is for a Church embedded in its neighbourhood, offering spaces, services, facilities and support that serve the local community.





shedkm

fabric church

FABRIC CHURCH

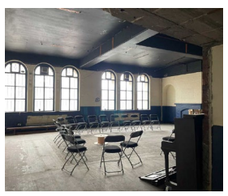
The Ardwick Barracks site comprises the main barracks building fronting on to Ardwick Green, the Drill Hall immediately behind and a 1950s garage/workshop building. The buildings are Listed at Grade II. Part of the site is already in use by Fabric Church, however, the majority of the spaces are vacant and in disrepair, having been unoccupied since the army moved out in 2018. The team recently secured planning and Listed building consent to replace the deteriorating Drill Hall roof and roof light, with the intention of making the site weather-tight as soon as possible in order to prevent any lasting damage to the fabric of the buildings.

Fabric Church has been working with a design team led by shedkm architects, and supported by Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture, Hexa structural engineers, Crooks Walker Consulting, Ashton Hale, Design Fire Consultants and PMC2, to develop proposals for the regeneration of the entire site for church, community and outreach activities.



proposed ground floor plan







shedkm

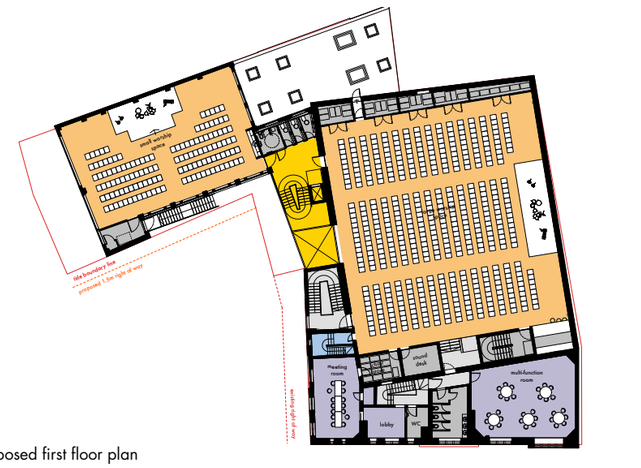
fabric church

FABRIC CHURCH

Our proposals hinge around adding modern interventions containing lift and stairs to allow the building to safely accommodate visitors, improve accessibility and legibility, whilst meeting modern fire safety regulations. These new elements allow the light-filled first floor Drill Hall to become the main Church worship space, with a welcoming community cafe below, accessed through the restored original entrance. Existing spaces will be repurposed as assorted community and outreach spaces, including co-working space, children and youth activity spaces, meeting rooms and function rooms for hire.

The primary objectives of the project are:

- to repair, conserve and enhance the existing listed buildings
- bring the buildings back in to full use, providing public access for the first time
- secure the buildings' long term future with a vibrant and sustainable use
- embed the site within the Ardwick Green neighbourhood with daily community use
- reconfigure the internal layout to improve accessibility and visitor facilities



proposed first floor plan



primary entrance



cafe

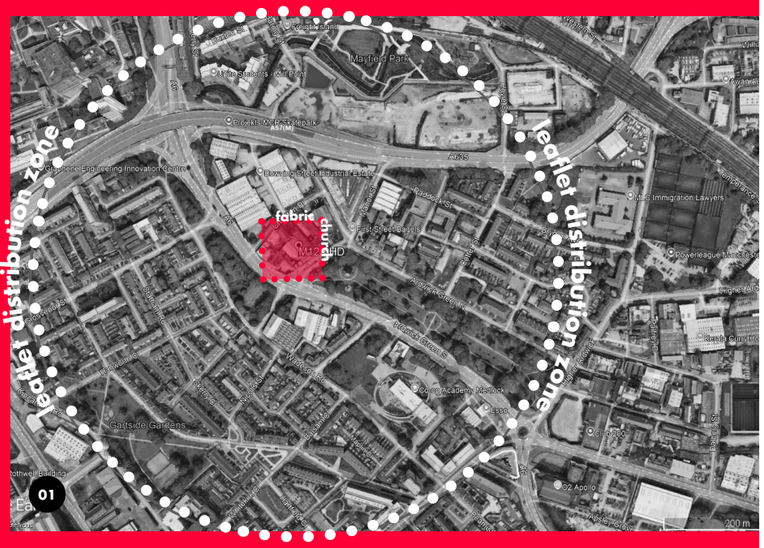


secondary entrance

shedkm

The team has been developing proposals for Fabric Church for over a year. The process started with identifying the key design moves, sketching the vision and spatially configuring + visually expressing the spaces through diagrams. We later moved into more detailed design, working collaboratively with the wider design team to develop iterations of key design elements in an effort to reach the best solution.

As well as weekly consultation with the design team, we reached out to Manchester City Council, local stakeholders, and the local community, inviting their views.



Manchester City Council

A number of pre-application discussions were held with planning and conservation officers in which no objections were raised to the proposed works.

Local stakeholders

The ward councillors for the Ardwick area, along with local residents, were contacted directly with a copy of a leaflet providing information on the proposed scheme and offering them the opportunity to attend a consultation event held at the site. Earlier meetings were also held with the councillors to brief them on the proposals and invite their thoughts.

Local community

As mentioned above, the local community received information leaflets and an invitation to attend a public consultation exhibition regarding the proposed scheme. By engaging with the local community we can gain a better understanding of the site and its context and endeavour to reflect this in our proposal.

The information leaflets and public consultation boards provided:

- an overview of the scheme - explained both through evocative imagery and explanatory text
- the site's location
- details of the applicant
- the history of the site

Following this, we received feedback from both the church congregation and the local community which was unanimously positive.

key

01 White circle encapsulates the leaflet distribution zone
02 Public consultation held at Fabric Church

"I live in Manchester and have for the last 16 years - I have seen the plans and can't wait to see it built,"

"...as an accessibility specialist and member of the congregation, I am delighted with what the plans show,"

"I'm especially looking forward to the cafe and rec rooms!!"

"I can't wait to see Ardwick come alive with this building renovation,"



03.05 pre-approved ‘enabling’ works

An initial ‘enabling’ works planning and listed building application (ref. 141801/LO/2024) was submitted in December 2024, and subsequently approved in March 2025. Due to the poor state of repair of the existing roof and roof lights, these works were prioritised in order to make the buildings weather-tight as soon as possible and prevent any lasting damage to the fabric of the buildings.

These approved works encompass:

- replacement of the late-20th century drill hall roof
- replacement of the late-20th century drill hall roof light
- replacement of the late-20th century roof light on the second floor of the barracks building

Drill hall roof

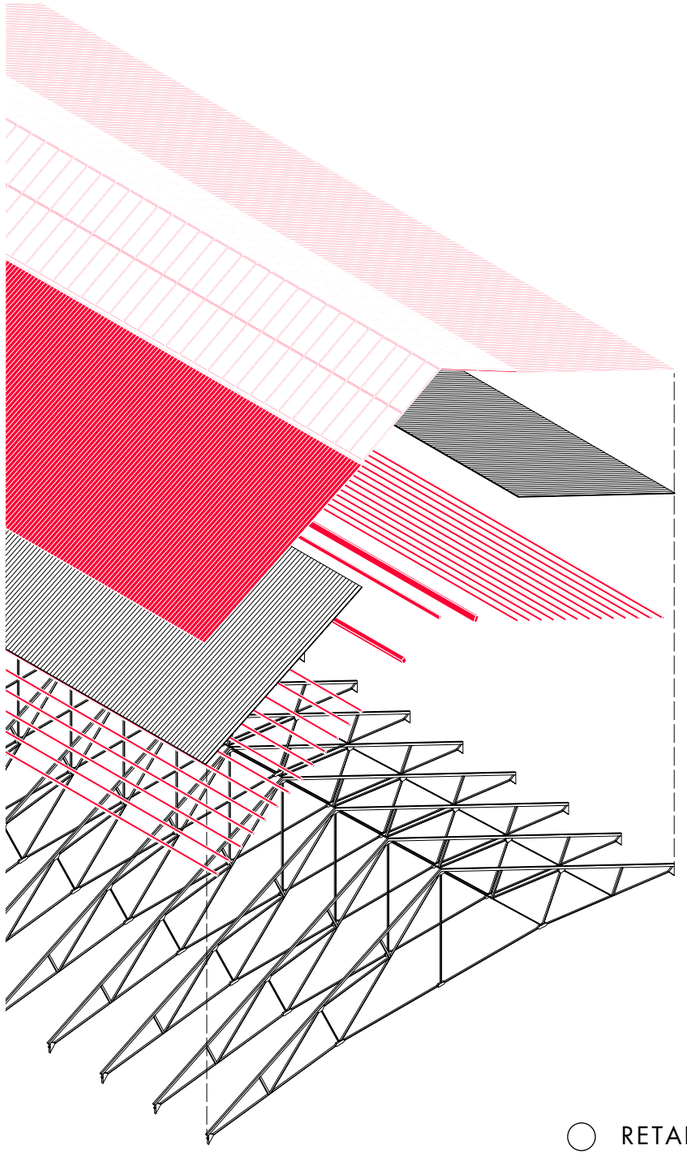
The first floor of the drill hall is a large, light-filled space enclosed by a lightweight roof supported on delicate wrought iron trusses. The original trusses paired with the quality of light brought in through the roof lights are crucial to both the building’s original character and the quality of this space. The intention is, therefore, to retain, unaltered, the existing roof trusses but strip off the existing uninsulated roof coverings and single glazed ridge roof light and replace them with a new insulated roof and double glazed roof lights with enhanced thermal performance.

Barracks building roof light

The barracks building features a roof light to the second floor which is in poor condition and leaking in several locations. The intention is, therefore, to replace the existing single glazed roof light with a new double glazed roof light of the same size but with enhanced thermal performance. Currently obstructed from view by internal partitions and a suspended ceiling, all existing paritions and suspended ceiling will also be removed to allow the room to feel its full impact, enhancing the quality of this space.

key

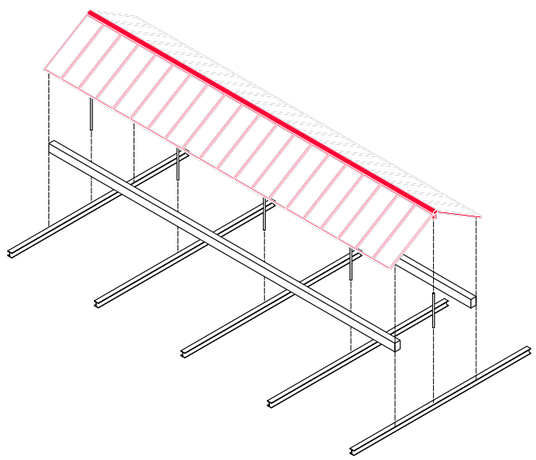
01 Exploded axonometric drawing of the drill hall roof
02 Photo taken from the underside of the barracks building roof light
03 Axonometric drawing of the barracks buiding roof light



01

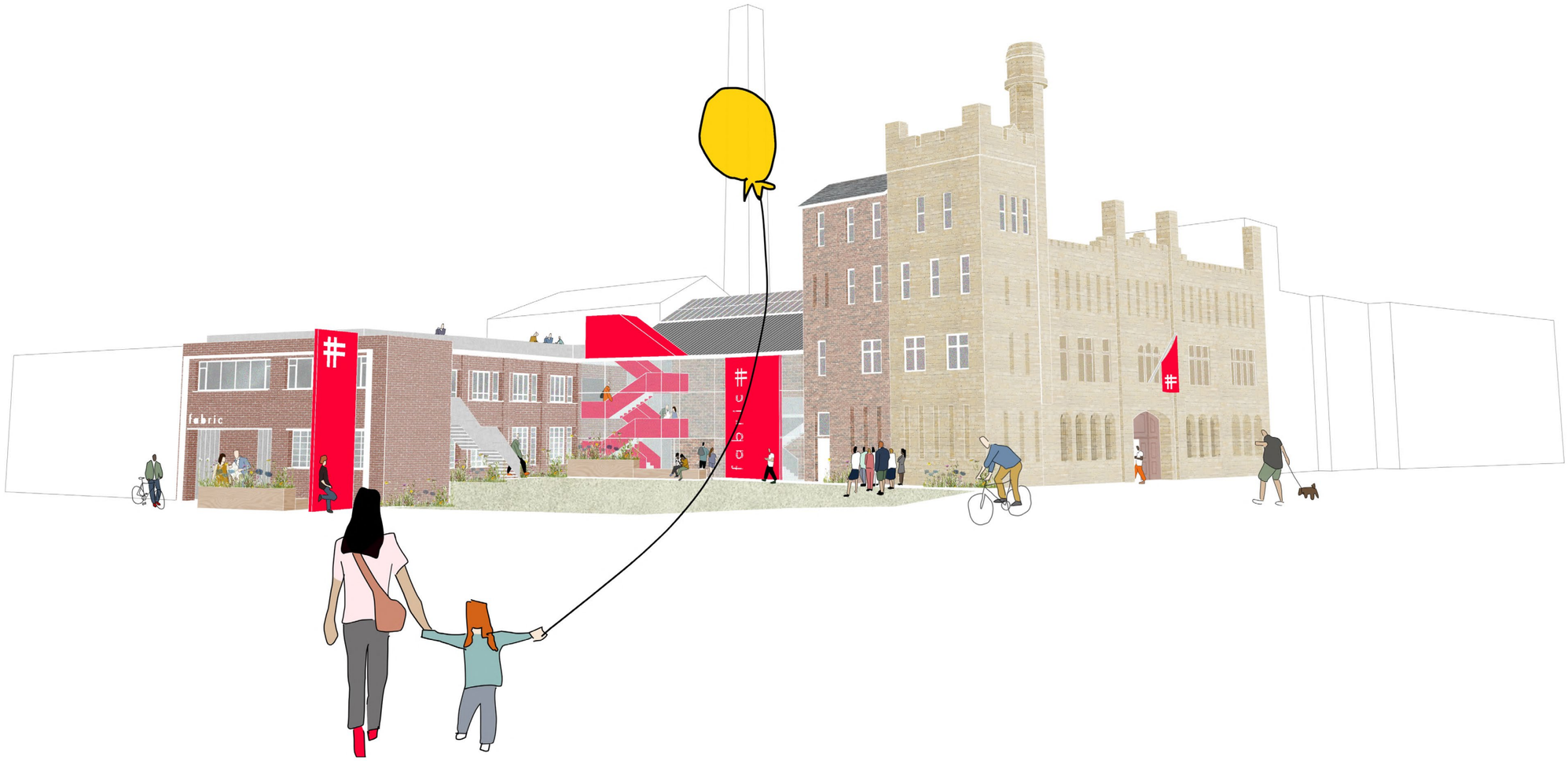


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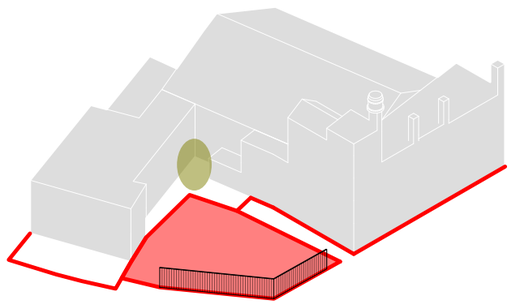


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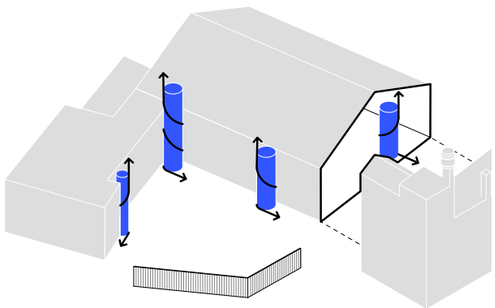
04 design proposal



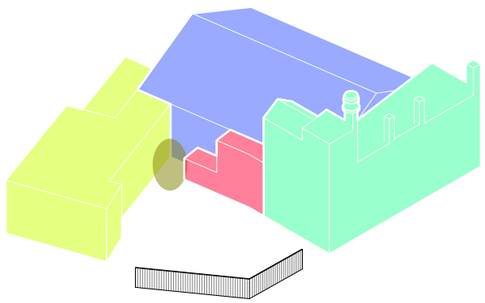
04.01 overview



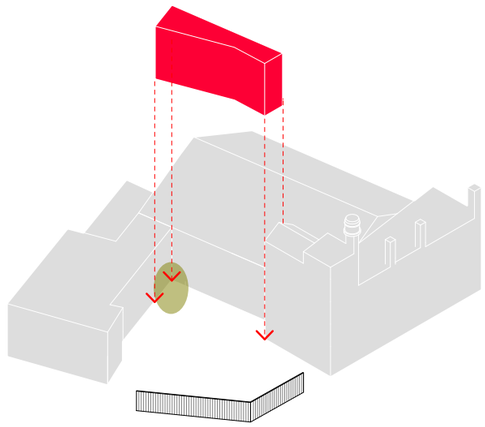
site boundary



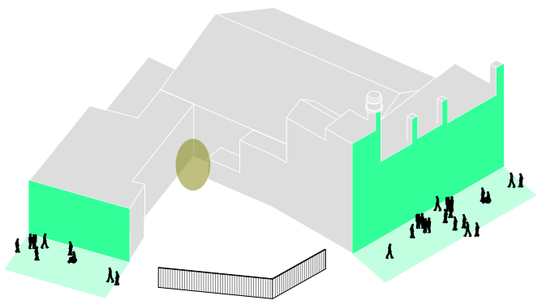
circulation



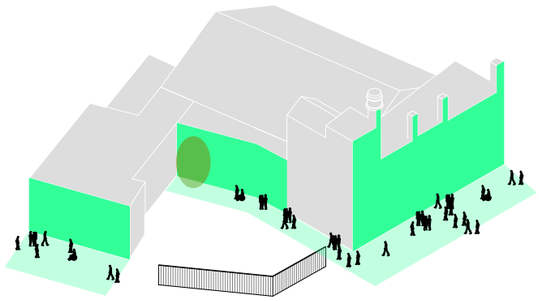
existing buildings



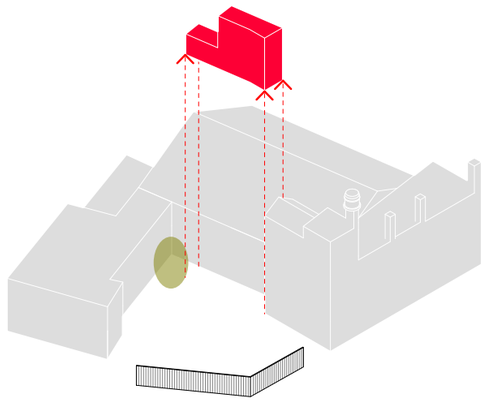
intervention



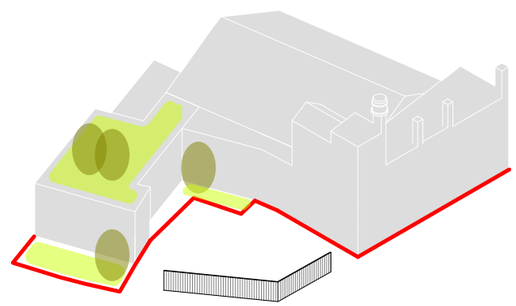
existing entrances



existing + new entrances



demolition

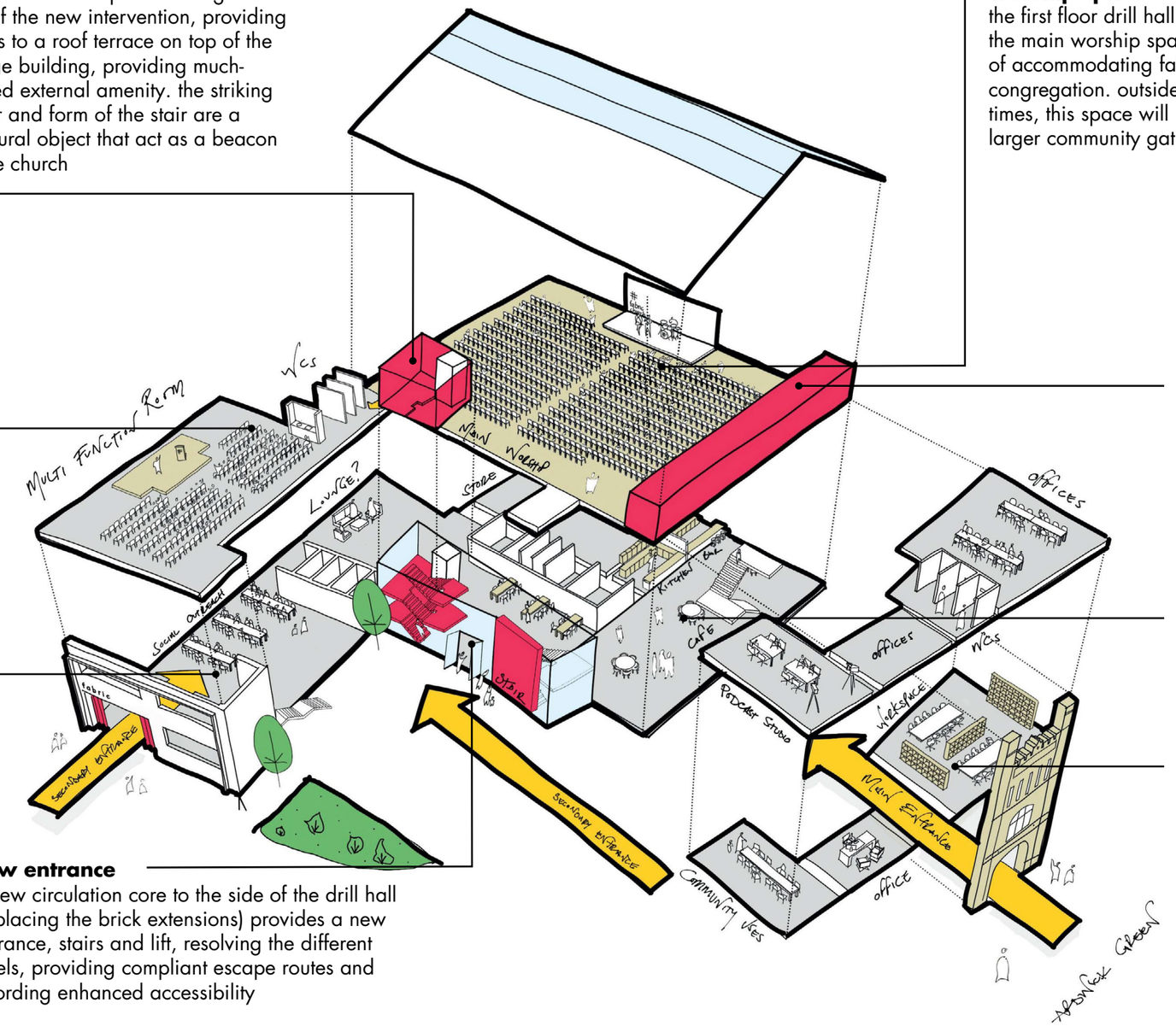


outdoor amenity

04.02 spatial configuration

new stair
the main stair will punch through the roof of the new intervention, providing access to a roof terrace on top of the garage building, providing much-needed external amenity. the striking colour and form of the stair are a sculptural object that act as a beacon for the church

worship space
the first floor drill hall will become the main worship space, capable of accommodating fabric's growing congregation. outside of worship times, this space will be available for larger community gatherings



flexible space
the existing first floor space in the garage building - currently used for worship and other activities - will remain a flexible space for smaller groups, children's work and courses

social outreach
the long-term vision is for the existing indoor car park to be put to better use as a space for social outreach. this will form a separate application once alternative parking provision has been explored
(the car park alterations are not proposed as part of this application)

new entrance
a new circulation core to the side of the drill hall (replacing the brick extensions) provides a new entrance, stairs and lift, resolving the different levels, providing compliant escape routes and affording enhanced accessibility

new stair
a new element located at the back of the barracks building provides a compliant escape stair from the drill hall and resolves the level change between hall and barracks with new steps and enclosed platform lift for enhanced accessibility

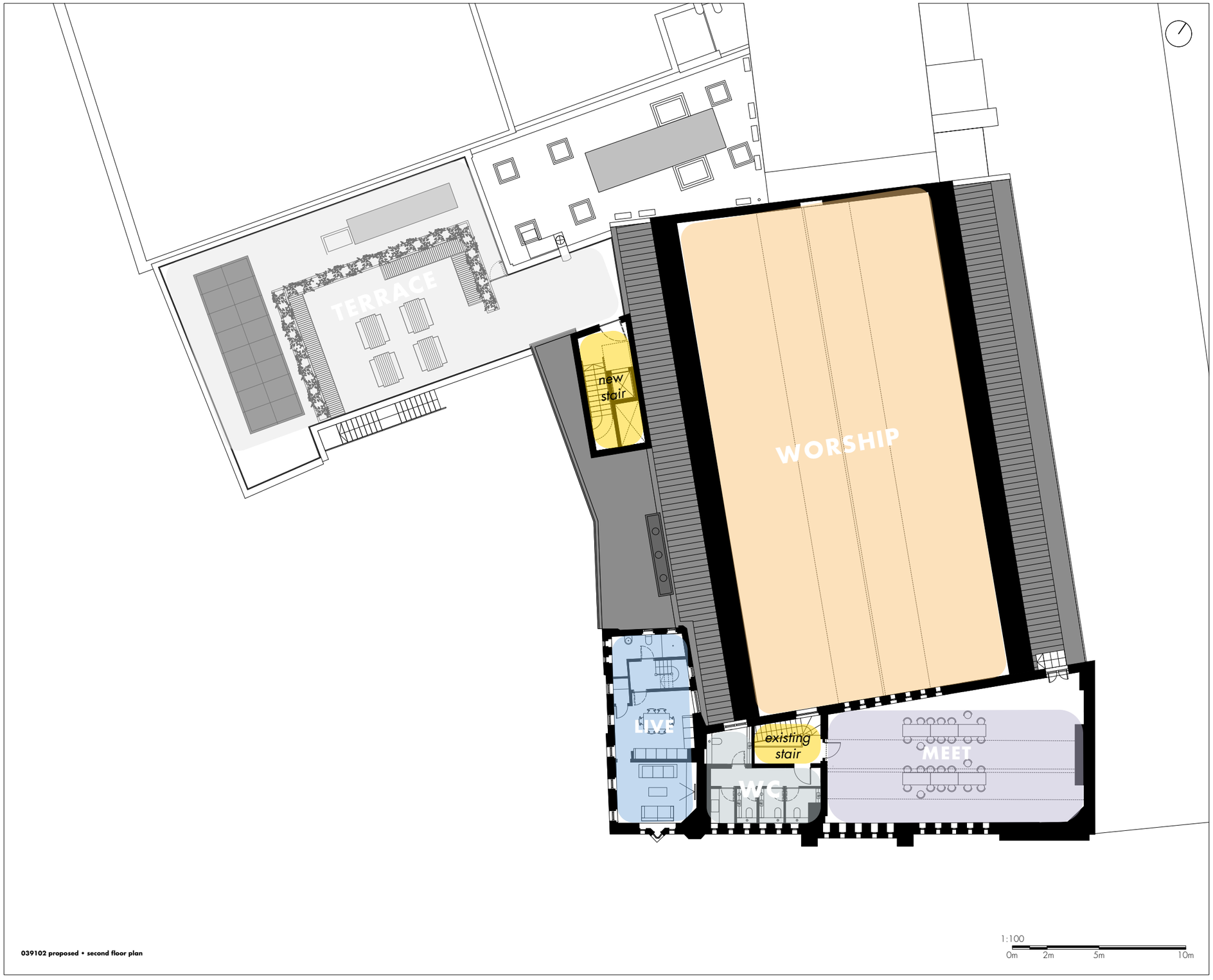
cafe
visible from the main entrance, a community cafe provides a welcoming space for visitors

community hub
the barracks building will feature a variety of spaces such as a library, a co-working space and meeting, activity and function rooms which will be open for daily use by the wider community

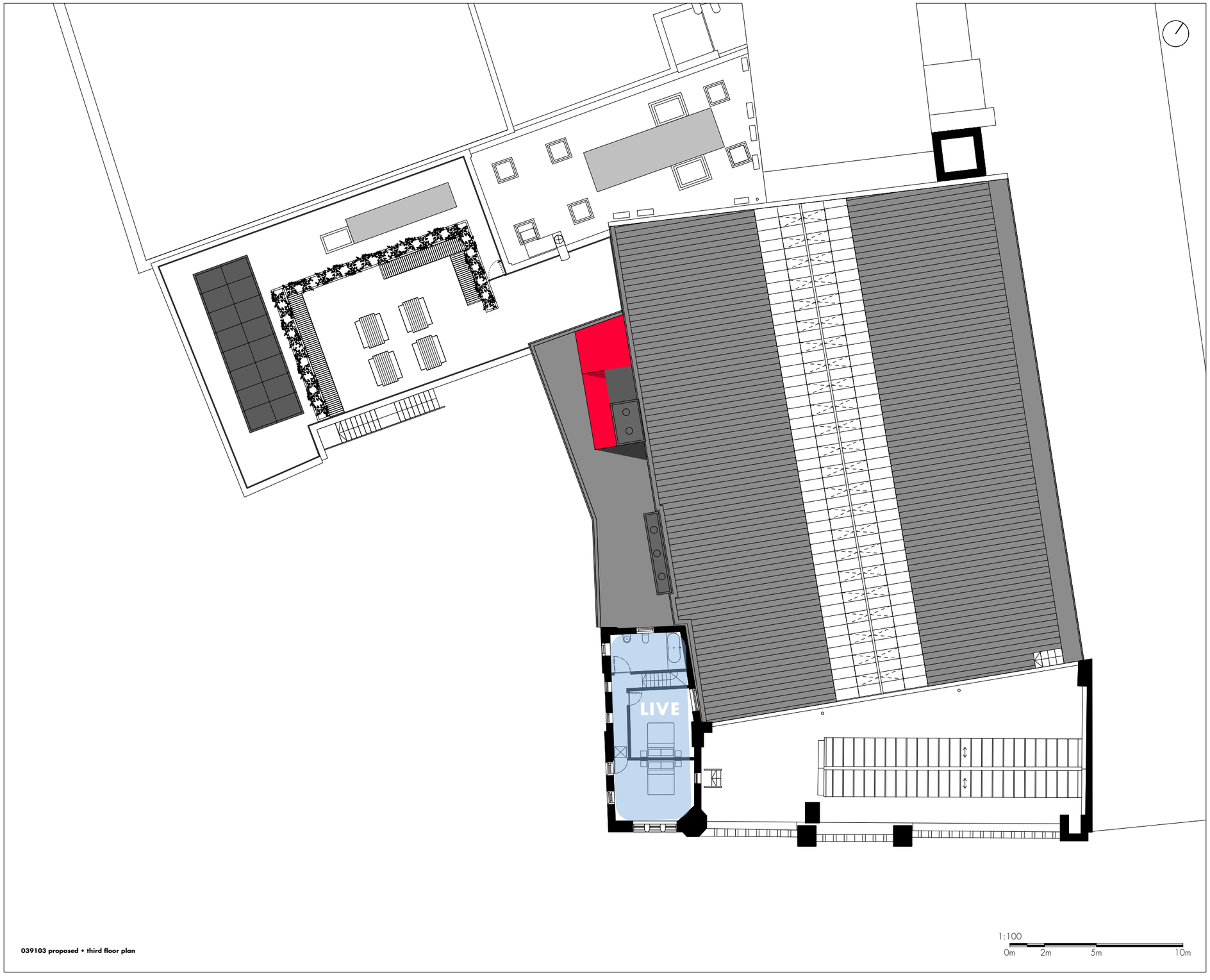


039100 proposed • ground floor plan


PLANT
STORE
MEET
WC
new stair
new stair
WORSHIP
new stair
private stair
new stair
existing stair
MEET
CHILL
MEET
039101 proposed • first floor plan
1:100
0m
2m
5m
10m



039102 proposed • second floor plan



039103 proposed • third floor plan